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RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS IN MONGOLIA AND CHINA.

VOL. II.

RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS

IN

MONGOLIA AND CHINA.

W.C-43

BY

P. PIASSETSKY.

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TRANSLATED BY J. GORDON-CUMMING.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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A JOURNEY IN CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

The Rapids—Wreck—Divers—Banks of the Upper Han—A Chinese Christian—Town of Han-Tchong-Fou—Farewell to our Boat—Visit to the Authorities—Catholic Mission—Sketch in a Temple during Service—The Chinaman Tan—School—Some Words on Public Instruction in China—Our Boat-owner and Family—Mrs. "General"—My Patients—Chinese Doctors—Theatre—Departure.

We have been two months and a half getting up the river, which gradually rises to a higher level above the sea. At this season, the water being low, the navigation is really less dangerous, as the rocks can be more easily seen than when the water is at its height.

March 29th. After getting up several rapids we stopped early, as Van told us that there was no other suitable halting-place for sixty *li*.

The people on the banks were very obliging in coming to offer us bread, fowls, eggs, sweetmeats, rice, sugar, and the sesame-seed.

Great animation prevailed among our people; the boats and cables were all overhauled, and preparations set on foot for the passage of the Loun-Tan rapids, the most dangerous we have yet come upon.

March 30th. Since early dawn every one was stirring. Our boat was to be the first to start. The men from the second boat, and others who came temporarily to our aid, had separated into two detachments; some followed the right bank, and others the left. Each of these detachments had its own rope fixed to the base of the mast, and another was fastened to the top, ready to be used in case of need. Sin-Van was in the bows, with a boathook in one hand and giving the signal for departure with the other, for the noise of the rapids made it impossible to hear a single word, while some men armed with boathooks stood on deck ready for action.

At length Van, having given a last look round, gave the signal to start. We slowly advanced towards the rapids. Waves of foam now surrounded us, beating against the quivering sides of the boat, and leaping and dancing around it, as if seeking to break it in pieces, and punish it for its audacity in venturing into their midst. To my great alarm the boat seemed at one moment to come to a standstill, and I began to regret that we had not landed all our precious possessions. But it was now too late; if the ropes were to break all our possessions would be lost—notes, maps, botanical collections, stuffed birds, drawings, minerals, samples of silk—everything would go to the bottom. The time seemed to pass very slowly. . . . Van remained quiet and grave, assuring us that he had every confidence in his boat, and that the water could not reach its deck; he had previously examined the ropes, and could answer for their strength. The noise was so tremendous that I could not hear a word

that Matoussowsky shrieked into my ear. The scene was deficient neither in grandeur or interest. In my imagination Van appeared to court all the most dangerous places; but no one would have dared to advise, or even to make a remark; everyone had the fullest confidence in him.

In the excitement of the moment I forgot to take the time when we entered the rapids, but I fancy we were about a quarter of an hour getting up them. At last we left the formidable Loun-Tan behind us, and we now got into a comparatively calm reach of the river. After having gone a very little way farther, we made the boat fast behind a promontory on the left bank, and every one set out to help the chief and his boat. The Cossack alone remained to guard our things.

"The *ma-yan-tchouan* will not get through," said Van, as we went along, and filled us with consternation with the utterance of this death-warrant. At this moment a cargo-boat got over the rapids, and Sosnowsky's followed slowly with at least twenty men at the ropes. According to his usual practice, Sosnowsky had landed with Siuï; the others had remained on board.

Possessed by a great fear, our eyes followed the boat, which was already in the midst of the rapids. The waves broke against her broad, flat stern, and rocked her more and more violently from side to side, till one stronger than the rest caught and smashed her in on the starboard. The water rushed in. Everyone on board flew to the other side, which rose in proportion as the starboard sank; the ropes broke one after the other, as the resistance of the boat became greater.

One would have thought that the boat would be taken off as swiftly as an arrow by the current. But being turned on its side, it went down slowly, broadside to the stream. At one moment the stern was not far from the bank, so the interpreter, the photographer, and the Cossack Pawlow seized the opportunity and jumped on shore. I can still see the owner of the boat, with his wife locked in his arms, preparing to meet their death. The Cossack Stepanow, who did not seem to believe in the danger, and the Chinaman at the helm, still stuck to the vessel.

I ran towards them with Matoussowsky, without taking in how utterly useless it was; we all had lost our presence of mind, and ran about doing no good. . . . The boat was already in bits; it heeled over more and more, until it turned completely over. Fortunately the four people had time to get on the part above the surface. The deck was shivered into fragments on the stones, and all the luggage fell into the water. Trunks and portmanteaux were carried down the stream. After the first moment of stupefaction, we began to act; the Cossack Pawlow undressed and swam after the rope, vainly hoping to stop the boat. From the opposite bank a Chinese made a similar attempt, and this time more successfully, as, after several attempts, he succeeded in getting hold of the rope and landing it. Others then assisted him to hold on to it; but it broke in several places, owing to the force of the current against the boat.

The Cossack Stepanow, who had stuck to the wreck, got hold of the end of the second rope, seized it between his teeth, swam towards a place where the stream was not so

strong, and fastened it securely to a stone. The course of the boat was thus arrested, and the three people miraculously saved.

"So it is all over," observed Matoussowsky. "Everything is lost, and our expedition ended. It only remains for us to return discreditably homewards; meanwhile it is essential that we should find out what we have lost and what we have still left to us."

The boat had been rescued from the opposite bank, so we had to return to our own and cross the river. I was struck by the length of the rapid, which I now found to be about three quarters of a mile long.

Jumping from one rock to another, or wading through the water, we at length reached the wreck on the shore. Two cocks tied together had miraculously escaped, and various articles lay scattered about, of course saturated with the wetting they had had.

The unfortunate owner of the boat looked on the scene of the disaster with a dark and angry scowl, and his poor wife was weeping bitterly.

Sosnowsky came back to us and said, with perfect composure, "Thank heaven, the papers are saved!"

"What papers?" asked Matoussowsky, with surprise.

"The commercial instructions and the general notes upon China."

Here the conversation ceased. This was scarcely the moment to talk about "notes on China."

We were sad and ashamed, but Sosnowsky was quite undisturbed by this great misfortune. He next began

giving orders in Russian to the Chinese, who understood nothing he said. The Cossack Stepanow was in the river, busy taking out the few boxes that still remained in the wreck. The chief gave orders, shouting first for Siuï, who did not understand, and then for the Cossack Stepanow, who was most intelligent and energetic. "Why do you play the fool," screamed Sosnowsky, "why can't you turn the boat over and get the things out?"

It was not so easy to turn a boat over "capable of holding fifteen people with all their baggage." He next began shouting after the fat cook, who understood still less, and then turning to us, reproached us for not having sent him our Cossack Smokotnine.

"He is in charge of the boat, and we came ourselves to your assistance."

"And how can you assist me? Smokotnine could at least interpret for me; I can give no orders."

I went back to the boat, and sent Smokotnine to him.

Matoussowsky remained to find out the extent of our loss, and to see what he could save. I set to work to stuff the birds I had got in the morning, happily an entirely mechanical operation, for, in the face of the disaster that had overtaken us, I was by no means disposed to work.

My thoughts wandered towards the unknown future. Here was the boatman and his family ruined for ever; his boat being at once his home and his sole means of subsistence. Our money, arms, and ammunition were all under water. What was to become of us? We sent our poor shipwrecked companions some meat and rice, tea, sugar, and wax candles,

as being of the first necessity. Communication between our boat and the scene of the wreck was somewhat difficult; and when we wanted to go back over the rapids with our boat, the Chinese refused to go. Rather late in the evening our Cossack returned with the news that Van had found some divers in the neighbouring villages. Despite all obstacles, they succeeded in fishing up various articles; this, however, was only to show their powers. Our men had warned us that if they were not promised a handsome reward, they were capable of finding the silver and dividing it amongst themselves without our being any the wiser. We were therefore recommended to give them a hundred roubles for each case, and after a long discussion consented to this. The divers at once commenced operations at the place where the ship had gone to pieces. They sounded the bottom with long boathooks, and when they imagined they had found anything, one of them dived for it. Once at the bottom, if the article was heavy, he fastened it to the boathook, and gave a signal by means of a rope, to draw up the boathook and whatever they had attached to it; the lighter objects they took up themselves to the surface.

They had already rescued a chest containing 300 lbs. of silver, and a gun and revolver quite unharmed by the water, all the cartridge-boxes, the line, fourteen bundles of sapeques, some sacks of rice, &c.

The Cossack showed boundless admiration for the divers, and expressed himself in a very original manner on the subject.

"Well, your honour, I have never met people with such

good wind, the rogues! One of them plunges and disappears; we wait and wait, mentally remarking, 'It's all over with you, my little Chinese; you will never smoke any more opium.' But no! here he is again, hardly able to recover his breath; a very little more and he would have given his soul back to God. To-morrow they will go on again and continue the search; and it is between the rocks that they dive, just where the water is in the wildest commotion. Great heaven, what a misfortune! and after so many warnings, to which no attention was paid," sighed the Cossack. "How these little Chinese will laugh at us."

March 31*st*. The first thing in the morning I went to the scene of the disaster. Everything they had been able to save was piled up on the shore. Some time would be required to dry the things, and prevent their further destruction. The fifteen cases we got at Tiumen for photographic apparatus, the samples of various sorts of merchandise sent by the Kiachta merchants: stuffs, furs, skins, and clothes, were in a deplorable condition. Amidst this picturesque disorder were the chests of tea given us by our countrymen at Han-Keou, piles of books, silken stuffs, presents from the mandarins, linen clothes of all sorts, musical-boxes, preserves, presents intended for the mandarins, magic-lanterns, articles in papier-mâché, chromo-lithographs, &c. Farther on we found scientific instruments, one of the chests of silver (the other was found later on), cartridges, tents which were now being used for shelter—in a word, a regular bazaar—but in what a state!

Amongst the things missing were ingots of silver worth

200 roubles, forty pounds' weight of powder, and the passport given us by the Chinese Government.

Everybody was busy unpacking the things and spreading them out to dry; and after contemplating this sad spectacle I retraced my steps, full of regret for the waste of time all this necessitated.

April 1st. The rain lasted all day, which necessarily retarded our start. Meanwhile our provisions were getting exhausted, and we had to send a great distance to procure more. After dinner I wandered about with my gun, and this walk thoroughly taught me all the difficulties with which the men who towed us had to contend; on both banks of the river there were rocks impossible to climb. The people belonging to those parts only come there in the day-time, and then bring lanterns with them. If night over-takes them, and they are unprovided with lights, they lie down and stay where they are.

I came to a village where my arrival gave evident pleasure to the inhabitants, especially to the women, who were much amused by the sight of the "foreign man."

It is very likely that I looked ridiculous in my European dress; but in the eyes of the Chinese, a European is always ridiculous, whether in uniform or out of it.

From the village I went down a path leading to the river, and noticed several rapids, following each other at very short distances, and enormous stones standing out of the water.

I was followed by three Chinese, who helped me most obligingly over various obstacles, without being asked to do so, and seemed much taken up with my gun. I shot a

halcyon (*tzei-tzou*). The Chinese usually snare these birds, pluck some of their feathers, and then, after levying this contribution, restore them to liberty. These feathers are worth their weight in gold, which to be sure is not great, as they are very light.

The day was far advanced, and the setting sun lit up the mountains on the opposite bank. I had wandered about three miles from the boat, and my obliging companions recommended me to go back without loss of time. Their advice was sound, as the night had already closed in when I reached our head-quarters. Our Cossack, who came back a little later, told us that the divers had that day received the 200 roubles (£32) promised for the salvage. They had fished up a gun, the powder, and the photographic apparatus, which was quite unharmed, thanks to the cases we got at Tiumen.

April 2nd. Nothing worthy of note.

April 3rd. The thermometer had stood at 26° Reaumur in the shade during the past two days, and to protect themselves from the sun's rays the Chinese had donned immense straw hats with wide brims. They had amused themselves playing with narrow cards, a little like dominoes, crouching round a stone, which answered the purpose of a table. The owner's three children ran about entirely naked on the sand, and played at towing the boat, which was represented by a small box attached to a string.

April 4th. After this enforced delay of four days, a boat had now been hired, and everybody settled down in it. It was smaller than ours. They ought to have changed boats at Che-Tsouen-Chien, at which point the boatman had

begged to be left behind. We should have profited by the exchange, and the poor man would not have been reduced to such a plight. We only left 30 roubles (£4 16s. 3d.) for him and his family, although his boat had cost him 400 roubles (£64 3s. 4d.)

April 5th. A clouded sky and a small penetrating rain. We came to another rapid, which was a great deal more difficult and more dangerous than that of Loun-Tan. I remember that a traveller named Father Lecomte says somewhere that he had done twelve thousand miles in ten months on every sea on the globe, but had never been in such danger as he had been during the ten days he had spent on the Chinese rivers. This is of course an exaggeration, but it gives some idea of the dangers one encounters. It took fifty men to get our boat past the rapids, which are here called Bie-Tan. Some dragged at the ropes, others worked with boathooks; two men were at the helm, and the Commander-in-chief was on the roof of our cabin. The scene was somewhat singular; the noise of the waters and the cries of the men made a terrible concert. We felt that something awful and solemn was going on. We thus passed three rapids without misadventure, but we saw a cargo of tobacco wrecked.

We halted before the temple of Van-E-Miao, where every boat-owner is obliged to deposit an offering of 300 sapeques, and receives a registered receipt; it was, therefore, a mere fiscal tax, although they endeavoured to give it a religious character.

April 6th. The boatmen hastened to get over the rapids, fearing that the rain would cause the river to increase in

volume. The stones were now entirely hidden, and the channel became more dangerous. At last we got over the final rapid, the mountains began to be farther off, the banks of the river lost their wild aspect, and we began to meet with pasture-lands, fields, villages, and dykes similar to those I have already described. The river became wilder, and was no longer dangerous, but the water was shallow.

April 7th. As we advanced the scenery gradually altered; the mountains disappeared on the horizon, and the river now watered plains and cultivated fields. The houses became more frequent, and domestic animals, such as horses and mules, grazed round them. The oxen reminded us of the Tyrolean breed. This change of scene gave us great enjoyment after the daily sight of arid rocks and mountains.

We reached the town of Yan-Sien, situated at some distance from the river, and I at once made for it, accompanied by a very useless policeman, who did not in the least know how to keep the crowd in order. Sending him to the municipal administration to apply for two more, I entered a temple, followed by the crowd, and some of the children did not hesitate to make use of the heads and arms of their gods in order to obtain a better view of me. I then returned to the boat, where some invalids awaited me.

April 8th. Orders from the chief to delay our departure, as he had not finished his correspondence, or the reports to send back to Han-Keou by a messenger who had joined us some days ago.

April 9th. We left at four in the afternoon, after the messenger had received a report of our shipwreck. The Han

had again become very wide, but shallow; we could easily see its sandy bottom, and could wade through the water without its reaching to our knees.

Opposite Yan-Sien is a big village, called Tian-Bao-La, hidden by the dykes. The traffic between the two is continuous. Large boats take passengers across, as well as palanquins, and even horses and mules.

The corn was as ripe as ours in the month of July. Our boats advanced but slowly, as they often stuck in sand-banks.

April 10th. Brick and tile-making is one of the chief industries in these parts, the clay being of good quality. The bricks are very easily made, but the process by which they make tiles is more complicated. They also fashion cornices and various ornaments for their buildings in carved wooden moulds. The clay, which in its primitive state is of the usual colour, assumes a grey or yellow colour after baking.

We met a bamboo raft to-day, the owner of which lay sleeping, with his face hidden by an enormous straw hat, paying not the smallest heed to the progress of his floating craft. Our Van splashed it as we passed, but the Chinaman only raised his head slightly, and without a remark turned on his side and went to sleep again.

On our left we next came upon the sandy mouth of a tributary of the Han, called the Sïn-Schoüi-Ho, its chief peculiarity being that whilst its left bank was flat and sandy, the right was very steep, and covered with enormous blocks of granite. This did not, however, prevent the

cultivation of the slopes, as we could see wheat and poppy-fields,'&c.

The shallowness of the water now constituted the chief difficulty in the navigation of the Han. After the boatmen had in vain searched for a tolerably easy channel, the boat was simply dragged along through the sand.

We were nearing the town of Tchen-Kou-Sian. The banks of the river became more animated; numbers of big flat boats stranded there were awaiting the moment when the waters should be high enough for them to set out.

It was mid-day when we halted, and I at once started off to see the town, which is a quarter of a verst from the river (about 270 yards), and surrounded by pretty farms.

A very ancient road, paved with granite and porphyry slabs, led up to it, and must have been splendid in olden days, but now was scored with deep ruts, worn into it by countless wheelbarrows. I found crowds of beggars at the entry of the town, who seemed at their last gasp; and these scrofulous diseased creatures pressed around me, smelling of musk, garlic, and opium. I quickened my steps, but seeing a beautifully carved granite triumphal arch, I could not resist the temptation to sketch it. I took two hours to do this—two hours spent in the company of these filthy, diseased creatures, who kept putting their fingers on my drawing the whole time, and sticking their broad-brimmed hats between me and the view. The moment I touched one of these with my pencil the rest of the bystanders recommended the immediate removal of the hat. No one had any wish to hinder me, but the assembly worried me almost beyond



TOWING THE BOAT— WE MEET A BAMBOO RAFT.

endurance. Near one of the gates of the town was a theatre, and we could hear the sound of music and the voices of the actors, who having remarked the presence of a "foreign monster," addressed some remarks to me that set the crowd off at once. The crush became so great that it was impossible to withstand it. I was carried outside the gate along with my companions, and was quite alarmed for the numbers of children, who might easily have been suffocated in such a mob.

Two of the towing-men were to leave us here, and came to take farewell. We wondered where they would go in this strange town, but they told us that there were hotels in which, by paying 70 sapeques a day, they got food and lodging, and that they would easily obtain work.

April 11th. The shallow water made the navigation very difficult. The owner, soldiers, our servant Tjchou, and the Cossacks, all exerted their utmost strength to get the boat to advance a yard, after which they needed rest; then a fresh effort brought a slight advance, and so forth; it was, in short, navigation on land.

A Chinaman who was walking along the river, having seen us on the boat, bowed in the most polite manner and took off his hat, which is a thing the Chinese never do. We responded to his greeting, upon which the unknown individual got on the shoulders of one of our men, had himself carried on board, and asked in Chinese first whether we were French, then whether we were English, and finally discovered that we were Russians, the latter being what he least expected. It was impossible for the conversation to proceed during a

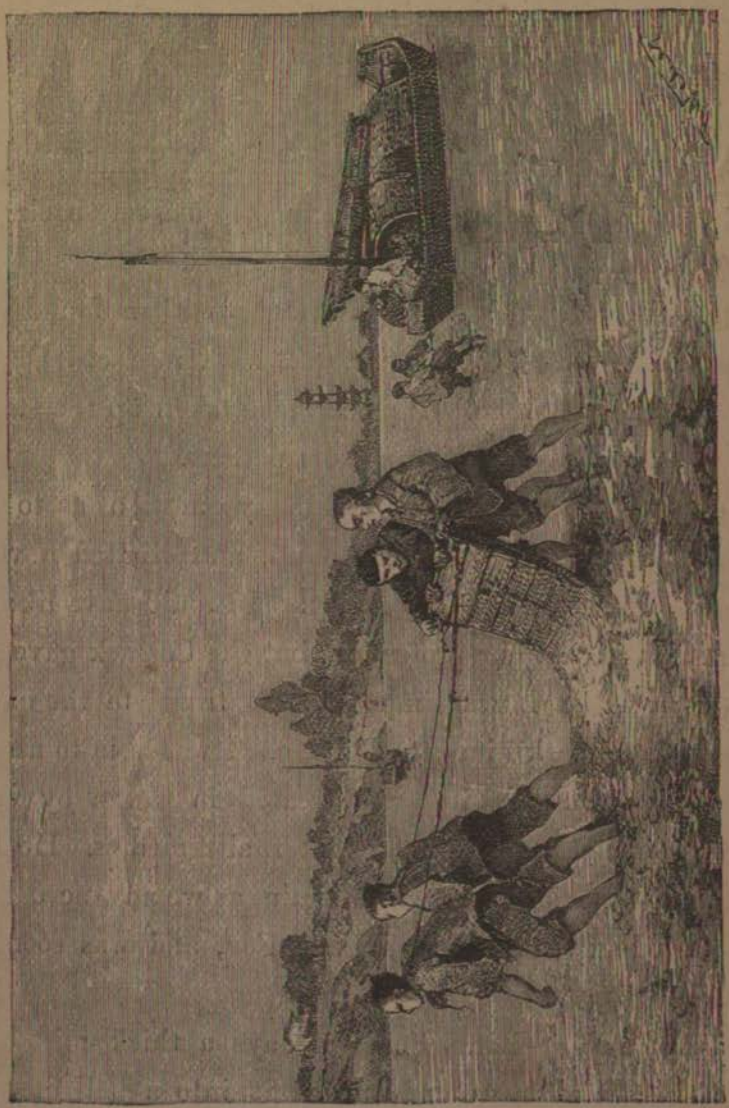
temporary absence of our Cossack. The Chinaman, however, was quite undeterred by this, and began chattering and telling us that we had been expected for ever so long at Han-Tchong-Fou; that our quarters were ready, and that the money sent from Pekin for us had already arrived. Seeing that we could not understand much of what he said, he next pointed to a cross round his neck, which showed that he was a Christian, and then brought out some books he carried in a satchel.

The Cossack arrived soon after, and we then found out that our new friend was a doctor, and had embraced Christianity twelve years ago. He had since taken up the study of medicine, and was on his way to a patient.

Matoussowsky asked him a good many questions as to the route we were to take across Khami, and elicited a very unfavourable account of its security. I should have liked a talk with him about our profession, but the Cossack gave me to understand that it was impossible to translate the questions I wished to ask him into Chinese. I was able to ascertain, however, that the itch was treated in China by very numerous but not very efficacious internal remedies. He left us in the expectation of meeting again, as we advanced like tortoises. He lived in Han-Tchong-Fou, and was soon to return.

April 12th: Very hot. For two days a thick mist had obscured the sun's rays, and turned it into a ball of fire. Our advance was as arduous as yesterday, the sand sometimes having to be hollowed out to get the boat to move. I have seldom seen horses work like our men did, but they

never complained or got angry; on the contrary, after they had pushed the boat on a quarter of a yard, and were resting,



HOLLOWING OUT THE SAND TO MAKE A PASSAGE FOR THE BOAT.

they chattered and laughed amongst themselves as if it were nothing at all.

Fortunately, Han-Tchong-Fou was not far off; we could see Chi-Pa-Li-Pou, its suburb. Numbers of people all around us; some wading the river, others going along the banks of the Han. We saw porters dragging about their burdens on a very practical apparatus, as the weight was equalised between the shoulders.

Four porters crossed the river bearing a palanquin, in which sat a lady smoking her pipe, and apparently quite unconcerned when she saw me level my glasses at her.

Suddenly, to our surprise, a favourable wind arose. Our sails were at once unfurled, and we set off with a speed that I had begun to forget was possible. The boatman had great hopes of reaching the end of our journey before nightfall, but we did not succeed in this, and had to stop short in the evening, whilst Van searched for sufficiently deep moorings to avoid striking on a sandbank.

At the same instant I saw a man walking along the banks at some distance, dressed in European garb. Charmed at the prospect of such a meeting, we asked ourselves who it could be; but our illusion was speedily dispelled, as it turned out to be one of our fellow-travellers, the interpreter, who had walked to Han-Tchong-Fou. He held up a parcel to us, and shouting that he had brought us our letters, asked if the chief's boat was far off. Telling him that it was still a good way behind, we bade him come on board, and wait till it caught us up.

A small boat soon brought him to us, so famished that he was quite unable to answer the various questions we put to him as to the town, its population, or our lodgings. He

swallowed several boiled eggs without waiting for the salt, and some tea without sugar, saying that he was accustomed to the latter, as he had had no sugar with him, and had been allowed none from the general store. "Indeed," he said, "sugar is a small matter when people are dying of starvation; and one fowl divided among eight people, you can understand, does not suffice to satisfy their hunger."

The dread of a scolding made him leave our boat as quickly as possible, and we now stopped for the night; it was the last we were to spend in the cabin which had been our abode for nearly two months. It was as warm as summer; the wild-duck, snipe, and other birds filled the air with their cries.

April 13th. First day of Eastertide. We spent the greatest feast of our year in an altogether ordinary way. We had even more troubles than usual, as we had to unload all our things and take them into the town.

At seven in the morning the boat stopped for good and all. We had to pack up and send all the bedding and baggage on wheelbarrows into the town, which was about a mile and a quarter distant. At last everything was done, and the boat resumed its former empty and dirty appearance. We took leave of the boatman and his family, to whom we had become so accustomed, and bidding farewell to the Han, we walked after the barrows, distracted by the horrible squeaking of their wheels. We were accompanied by the men who had towed us, and who each carried some of our baggage. An earthquake had occurred at Han-Tchong-Fou during the previous year, and killed a great many of the

inhabitants. The space separating the town from the river was covered with small houses and cultivated fields, among others fields of poppies in full bloom, wild crocuses (*Carthamustinctorius*), and garlic.

The care with which everything was kept up was particularly noticeable; the shape and arrangement of the beds showed the care of the horticulturist; thus, some were square, others triangular, &c. These various arrangements were all thought out according to the nature of the plants—the poppy, for instance, requiring the broad sunshine, whereas garlic will only grow in the shade.

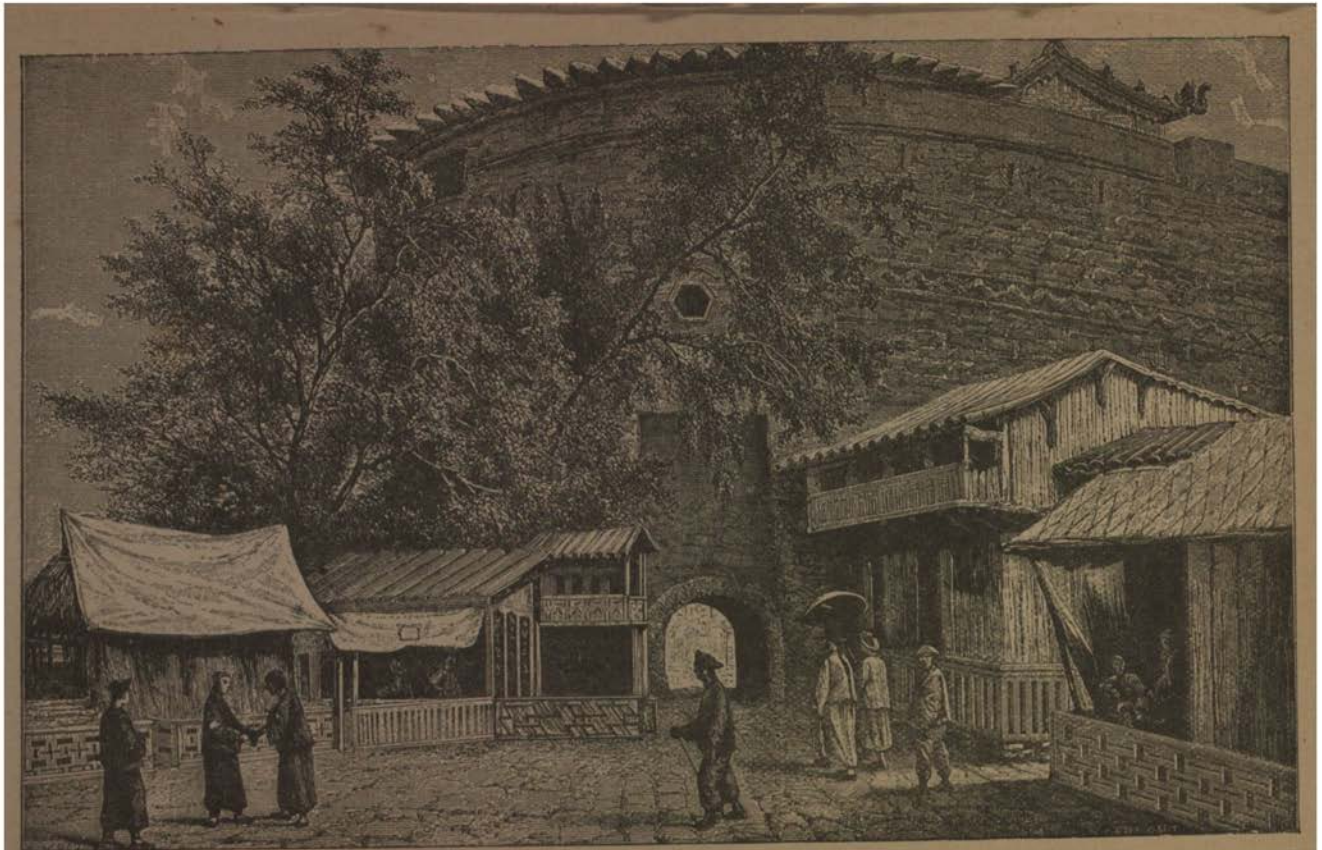
The street through the suburb was so narrow that two wheelbarrows could not pass each other in it. Groups of women collected in the doorways to see us, and at length we reached the grand old gate of the town, which during its existence must have witnessed many stirring events. Lined with iron, it had resisted many an enemy, but had also admitted some. During the insurrection of the Taïpings the rebels entered the town, after a siege of eight months. Going through the narrow streets I could imagine the terrible carnage and all the horrors of the war of which they were the scene. Two well-dressed young Chinamen made their way through the crowd to speak to us, and not being able to make themselves understood, they made the sign of the cross.

It would be difficult to describe the impression this simple action made upon me in the midst of this crowd of strangers with whom I had nothing in common; this sign, needing no other explanation, told me that these were brothers. They

took us under their protection and led us to the door of the house reserved for our use. I gathered from their talk that there were other Chinese Christians in the town, and that one of them could speak Latin (*houa*).

Our interpreter, whom I had imagined to be left behind on the boat, had already reached the courtyard of the house which the barrows loaded with our baggage were just about to enter. He informed us that it was intended we should remain two or three weeks here to repair the damage occasioned by the wreck. This meant that we should remain stationary six weeks at least, so we had just to make up our minds to it. Nine rooms in all were set apart for our people. The three apportioned to us were at the end of the courtyard, and consequently faced the entrance; the other six were at the sides. They were more like hen-houses or dirty sheds, having no ceiling. The wind whistled through the roof, the walls were covered with dust, cobwebs, and mould. Scorpions, mice, spiders, and woodlice had long taken up their abode therein. The miniature windows, latticed and filled in with paper, gave so little light that we could not read in the middle of the day without a candle. Everything smelt damp and musty. The beds and mattresses were like those in the jail of a small county town; it was, in fact, no better than a prison.

But this must not lead the reader to suppose that all the houses in Han-Tchong-Fou were like this. It was only one of those failures which may be met with in any part of the world, and it had been taken because the rent was moderate. We debated whether we should search for other quarters,



ENTRANCE TO HAN-TCHONG-FOU.

but came to the conclusion that we had better remain where we were, although it might easily have been avoided, as everything in this place was very cheap.

We chose the cleanest of the three rooms and proceeded to settle ourselves, endeavouring to make it as habitable as possible. It possessed, at any rate, one advantage in common with all other Chinese houses, namely, that of always being cool, although the heat outside was at its height, and unbearable even in the shade.

After a short time we sent to get some dinner at a restaurant, while the men who had towed us unloaded the baggage in an adjacent room and came to take leave of us. I had no intercourse with these men, and yet felt quite sorry to part from them. We could not understand each other, and yet they had zealously tried to anticipate my every wish.

Like a true son of Western civilisation, I was unable to believe that their motives could be disinterested, or that they expected no reward, but they never showed any dissatisfaction if their small services were left unpaid. These poor workmen were really sincere, and strangers to cupidity. I was unfortunately debarred from expressing my feelings to them, but they promised to come back and see us if they did not get work on another boat. Shortly afterwards our chief arrived with the rest of the party, and all busied themselves in getting settled.

The Chinese Christians returned with two others, bringing a letter from an Italian missionary, Father Vidi, from Verona, with greetings on our arrival, and informing us that

he had lived eight years at Han-Tchong-Fou, and greatly desired to make our acquaintance.

This letter, written in Latin, was sent to me by Sosnowsky with a request that I would answer it, which I immediately did. We continued our unpacking, with the door shut, to the great disappointment of the crowd, who would have forced it in if it had not been guarded by the police.

After dinner I wandered into the town, preceded and followed by two policemen. The good offices of the local authorities did not end here, as they further sent us an excellent and abundant dinner. The neighbouring streets, I was thus enabled to see, were tolerably wide and well-paved. I was also taken to some workshops, a mill, and various temples. The population, as far as I could judge, was quiet and peaceable.

April 14th. It was decided, in our own interests, at once to pay our respects to the local authorities. We therefore went in full uniform to the Ya-min, where the governor of the province lived, following the ceremonial so often described.

The reception hall consisted of a large room lighted by numerous windows, partially glazed and partially filled with paper, which constituted a certain amount of luxury.

The governor, a little bent old man, with sharp black eyes, wore mourning for his emperor; that is, he was dressed in white, without the button on his hat. After the customary presentations, he made us sit down beside him, and had both the interpreters to his assistance. The conversation was carried on in the following manner: Sosnowsky

spoke to Andreïewsky, who translated the words of the chief into the Kiachta dialect for the other interpreter, Siuï, and the latter turned them into Chinese! The two interpreters got on very badly together, the stupid old Siuï constantly supplying anything that came uppermost, and getting well abused for it, but his equanimity was quite undisturbed by this.

The governor (*tchi-fou*) was able, however, to understand the misfortune that had overtaken us, although, whilst expressing his great regret for the losses we had sustained, he never suggested any indemnity, which I had quite expected him to do.

Tea was then served and everyone began to smoke. The old man continued talking, and we all laughed without knowing exactly why. He gave us, however, reassuring accounts as to the remainder of our route. Our second visit was to the military commandant (*tzoun-biun*), whom we favoured with the same history of our losses, regret for our lost property, and consequent inability to present gifts.

We then adjourned to visit the prefect (*dao-taï*), a toothless old man, who reminded me of our own old civilians. Our fourth visit was to relate our misfortunes to the head of the district (*tchi-siañ*). Whilst tea was being served, Sosnowsky asked what tea came from Tzy-Yan-Siañ; whether it was black, and whether Han-Tchong-Fou could produce baï-ho, a particular kind of tea. The chief of the district replied that there was no black tea at Tzy-Yan-Siañ, and very little baï-ho at Han-Tchong-Fou.

Then ensued an argument between the interpreter, Siuï, and Sosnowsky, who vowed that Siuï had told him he had bought black tea there. Siuï as positively asserted that he had done nothing of the kind, and our host doubtless wondered why they had selected his home as the scene of their quarrels. They all shouted at old Siuï, who was quite stunned by it.

"What sort of interpreter are you?" said Andreïewsky; "you should never state anything on your own account; if a thing is asserted to be black, say it is black, even if you know it to be green."

When we got home, the subject was again revived, but remembering the advice Andreïewsky had given him, Siuï agreed to everything our chief advanced. Meanwhile the chief of the district had already arrived to return our visit, and awaited admittance in his palanquin at the door. His arrival was overlooked in the heat of the discussion, and he went away without our seeing him. This blunder was perceived too late, and Siuï was sent after him with our apologies.

April 15th. Visit from the *tchi-fou*. Our misfortunes were again related to him. He was moreover informed that our losses prevented our receiving them all as mandarins ought to be received, in that we were ruined, but that we thanked them all for their kind intentions.

The mandarin replied that everyone would help us as much as possible, and on the strength of our sad history they began sending us all sorts of food—roast ducks, boiled fowls, bread, &c. Our misfortunes, however, were not

exactly so great; we really had all we required, and a good supply of money from Pekin awaited our arrival. But the moral effect of the shipwreck made itself felt; thus Siuï, who had been sent with presents to the mandarins, informed one of them that our losses amounted to 40,000 roubles (£6,416 13s. 4d.).

After we were quite settled down, Sosnowsky endeavoured to obtain information concerning the insurrection of the Toun-Gan. For this reason he ordered the attendants to find out some old man in the town, saying old men were living chronicles.

This living chronicle existed in our own house, and as far as I know he filled the position of porter. He was certainly old, but it was perfectly impossible to extract anything from him. As the subject interested me, I was present at the cross-questioning he was put through by the two interpreters. He was given a chair and tea and then—

"Well, brother Siui-Siancheñ," began Andreïewsky, "pay attention, translate accurately, and add nothing of your own. Ask if he knows the words *Toun-Gan?*"

"*Ten-Gan* I know, but not *Toun-Gan*," replied the old man.

"It is the same thing," replied Sosnowsky; "there is only a difference in pronunciation. Let him only tell me that the words means 'east,' that is all I want."

"Toun signifies east," said the old man.

"Very well; now ask him if he knows the Salars and Sifans, and what these people are? Do their women wear pantaloons or petticoats? and during the war were the Sifans

the allies of the Toun-Gan or of the Chinese?" The old man answered a few of the questions, but had not the least idea of etymology. Having acquired a little more courage, he began chattering all sorts of nonsense, and contradicting himself right and left. It must be owned that the questions put to him were difficult for him to answer, such as, whether the tomb of Fou-Si, one of the most ancient emperors of China, was to be found in the town. He was also asked about the people of Miao-Tzy and Daldy, their political organization, the extent of their local commerce in goods from Russia or Thibet, &c. Seeing the utter uselessness of these interrogations, I absented myself from similar attempts on other occasions.

April 16th. Visit from Father Vidi, the Verona missionary, who came with a Chinese Christian called Tjchan. The father was still quite young, and could not have been more than thirty-five years old, but his hand shook and his step was uncertain. He was dressed like a Chinese, his head was shaven, and he wore a long artificial tail. As he had lived seven years in China, he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the language by this time, but it was difficult to get on with him, as he only knew Italian, and I had not much facility in expressing myself in Latin. He spoke very highly of the Chinese, and praised their kindness and industry, but accused the higher classes, and especially the lesser officials, of a good deal of presumption. He questioned us on the object of our journey, and could scarcely conceal the dread he had of our eastern railways, wishing much to know if they were approaching Kouldja. Seven years in

China had not made him indifferent to European politics, or to the amount of attention the West was devoting to the Eastern Question. He was probably interested in Kouldja owing to the disappearance of a missionary who had left for that country three years ago; however, he was sincerely glad to see Europeans again, and asked us all to dine with him the following night. The Catholic mission was at a considerable distance from the town, and having no horses, we were obliged to go there in palanquins. The two Chinese Christians before mentioned accompanied us, besides two policemen to each palanquin.

The bearers walked fast, but kept step with each other, and notwithstanding the swinging of the palanquin I was able to note the various small retail wares sold along the roads: salt, powder, cottons, vegetables, medicines, spectacles, fans, pottery, saddles, copper pots, combs, nails, boxes, beans, wadding, vermicelli, radishes, ribbons, birds, pastry, boots, tea-oil (*tza-you*), sugar-canes, pork, candles, garments, jelly of peas (*doou-fou*), hemp, red pepper in pods, rice, plaits of hair, sweetmeats, &c., were all to be had within half a mile.

The silence of the fields succeeded the noise of the town, but we very shortly came to a suburban village, then more fields, and another village, with such a number of shops that one wondered where the purchasers could come from, where every human being seemed to sell something. The corn they cultivated was chiefly wheat and barley; there were also poppy-fields, with flowers of every shade, beans, radishes, and saffron.

The clay cottages thatched with straw recalled our Russian hamlets. There were numerous little temples and mounds surmounted by slabs clearly indicating Mahomedan cemeteries ; for the country folk have no common cemetery, but bury their dead in the fields near their houses. The plain was watered by a number of canals, indispensable to the culture of rice. The mission-house was built in Chinese style, only more spacious and comfortable, and was kept very clean. We went to the church where service was taking place. On the left were twelve Chinese women on their knees, and on the right twenty-five men singing at the pitch of their voices.

It would not have been discreet to inquire into the number of native Christians, but the mission did not seem to make much progress, Christianity in China appearing to be a mere matter of gain, and only embraced from interested motives.

Our visits over, we began to have more time to ourselves. The weather, with the exception of a few rainy days, remained clear and warm, and it was curious in the month of April to see ripe cherries, apricots, and *Pi-ba* (*Eriobotria-Japonica*). We got up early in the morning, took our tea out in the courtyard, and worked in one of our little rooms, where no one came to disturb us, and which was always delightfully cool. I also worked in one of the temple courts —a thing that would scarcely have been possible in any other country.

Matoussowsky and I took our books, paper, ink, and everything necessary for drawing; a soldier took charge of

my camp-stool and umbrella, and then we started for the beautiful temple of Fou-Miao, which I greatly desired to sketch. The crowd was collecting, which made me whisper to the soldier not to let any one come into the courtyard. "Schi," said he, and letting us through the first door, placed himself in the passage, screaming at the pitch of his voice to the crowd that they were not to come in, and vigorously whirled his club in the air. The row brought out all the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, as well as the priests attached to the temple. The soldier called to the latter to be quick and shut the gates, and let no one pass after admitting him. The three priests ran to shut the door, leaving only a sufficient space for the soldier and two or three lucky ones to slip in. The latter each received a blow, but still counted themselves fortunate for having succeeded in entering. They knew perfectly well that they would not be sent off, for hundreds of others would have replaced them. The crowd blustered and shook the door, and after some time finally quieted down. I was already thanking heaven for their departure, when the soldier, guessing their intention, rushed as fast as he could and closed a forgotten door at the opposite side of the yard. And thus we succeeded in remaining alone.

I begged a priest to bring me a stool and a glass of water, a request which was instantly complied with, while they afterwards politely offered us tea.

I returned several times to the temple, until my drawing was completed, and then I wished to remunerate an old man I had put to considerable trouble. He flatly refused money,



TEMPLE OF FOU-MIAO.

but brought me a fan, and with profound salutations begged me as a remembrance to draw a "foreign" sketch for him. It was singular that this poor old man with one foot in the grave should care about a little drawing on his fan. I gladly acceded to his request, and drew the Winter Palace with Alexander's Colonnade for him, explaining that it was the house of our Huan-Di (emperor). The sight of his gratification was in itself sufficient to dispel all suspicion of avarice or greed of gain being a peculiarity of the Chinese people.

I did not invariably succeed in gratifying my wish for peace and quiet; the crowd often swarmed into the court I was about to enter, notwithstanding the blow from the policeman's club. As I was always dressed in European garb, the moment I showed my face in the streets I was followed by a crowd. Detachments of Chinese watched us through the cracks in the doors, announcing like regular heralds throughout the neighbourhood that we were about to go out, and the foreign doctor and artist was soon known to the whole population. "Laï le! Laï le!" (He is coming! he is coming!) was the cry in the streets when I appeared, and all those at liberty ran and offered their services to carry some of my things.

One day that I was on my way to the temple of Tchen-Houa-Miao, which I had by chance discovered the evening before, the crowd succeeded in getting into the court in spite of the soldiers' clubs; they wanted to get through the latticed gate separating the courtyard from the temple. This gate, however, being anything but solid, could not

have resisted the pressure of the crowd, and therefore had to be left open. Only the women remained outside. A feast was being celebrated in the temple that day, and a religious service was taking place. The scene I have just described occurred whilst the service was proceeding; the crowd paid no heed to the priests worshipping before the idols, and singing to the accompaniment of most hideous music. Those individuals immediately surrounding me discussed my garments, my boots, and my pencils, going into ecstasies of praise; others pushed and scrambled for places, whilst some came even to blows; the latter were turned out, principally from deference to me. The policemen, in seeking to restore quiet, brandished their clubs, and banged them against the lanterns and other sacred objects.

Such was Chinese piety! Later on, they lit their pipes, on which I ventured to take out a cigarette. One of the priests took a candle from the altar to give me a light, and after remarking what excellent aromatic tobacco it was, proceeded with the service. Two well-dressed Chinese, not priests, but evidently connected with the temple, ordered a table to be brought and tea given to me.

Although the Chinese temples had never inspired me with the least respect, I must own that during the service I never felt quite comfortable about drawing with my hat on and a cigarette in my mouth, but the Chinese paid no heed, and showed not the slightest respect for the place, their idols, priests, or religious services.

This noisy crowd, with their flutes, brazen cymbals, clarionets, &c., irritated my nerves. It was a regular hell

in miniature. Add to all this the most extraordinary mixture of colour, and things of every description—framed panels with inscriptions upon them, mirrors, flowers, shrubs, diverse symbolical signs, such as hands, knives, dragons' heads, banners on long poles; and lining each side of the altar, on tables, saucers full of bonbons and cakes; dolls made of coloured or gilt paper, representing the deceased members of families; lighted candles, and candles done up in yellow paper, offerings from the faithful.

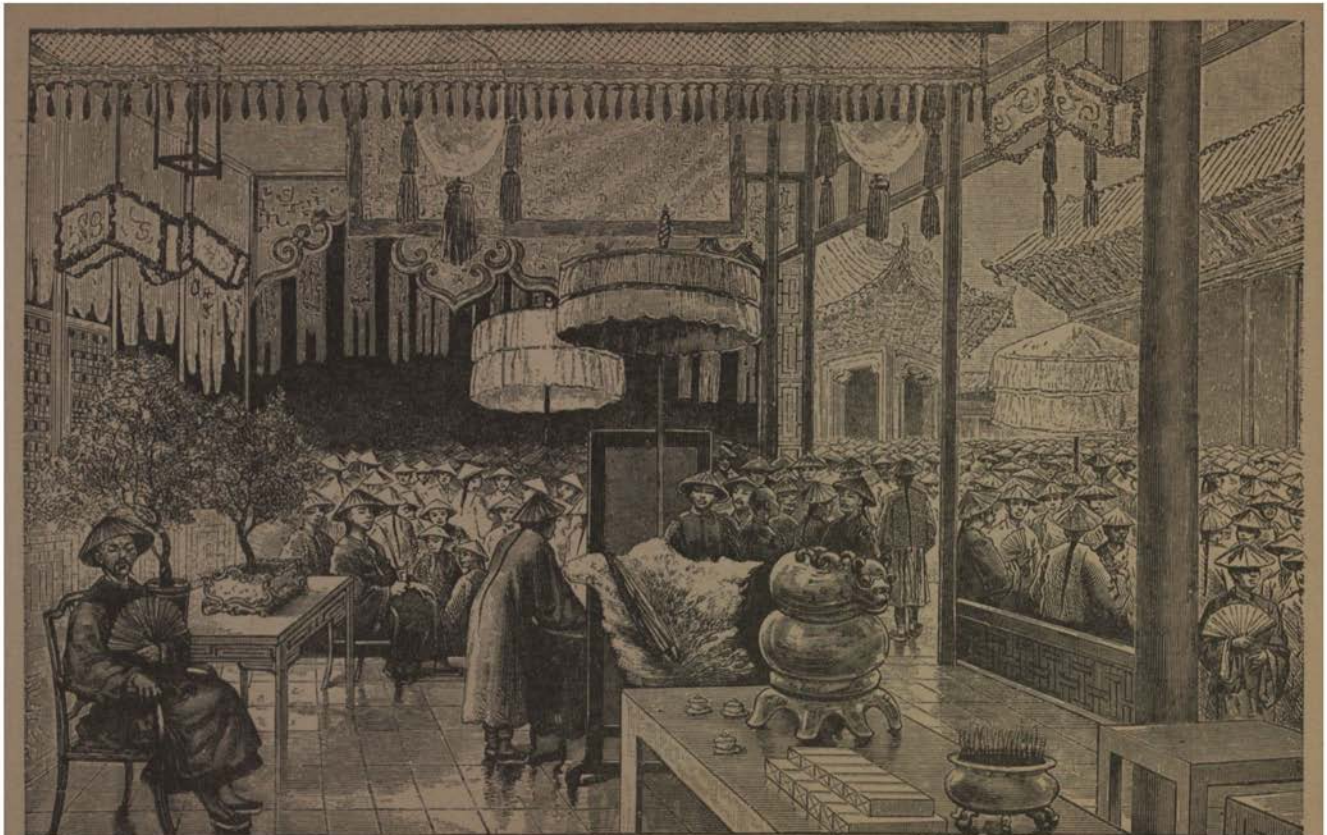
When the service was over, the priests placed themselves in a row before my table, with their backs to me, and after various profound bows took their departure.

This was a slight alleviation of my sufferings, and I was then able to continue my work. If any one got in front of me, a sign amply sufficed to make him get out of my way, the others calling out imperatively, "Schan Kaï! Schan Kaï! aïe-eou!" (stand aside! stand aside!)

When we had been a fortnight at Han-Tchong-Fou I had already made acquaintance with an immense number of people. Everybody greeted me in the streets; one because I had given him the end of a pencil, a sheet of paper, or some slight, but to him most valuable sketch; another because I had chanced to buy some trifle at his shop, or exchanged some words with him, and so on.

We had besides a great many visitors, either merchants coming to offer us their various wares, or sick people asking for advice, whilst others brought watches or musical boxes to be repaired.

Some wanted their portrait taken, and this simply because



SERVICE IN THE TEMPLE OF TCHEN-HOUAN-MIAO

they wanted to see a drawing of themselves. They preferred drawing to photography. And yet one would have imagined that both the process and the results in photography would have amused them most.

Going home one evening I saw a Chinaman whose long robe made him appear taller than he really was. After greeting him, I begged him to stand against the wall that I might measure his height, which he willingly did, and I found that he measured six feet three inches. The Cossack asked me on my return if I had not met a tall Chinaman, and when I inquired why he asked, told me that he had come to offer his services to us.

"That is a real good Chinaman," said the Cossack, "I never met a more intelligent specimen. Our Van is a good fellow, but this one is beyond anything. I began speaking to him, and he understood me before I got the words out of my mouth. 'I know, I understand,' he said at once, and explained everything. Such a man is not to be despised; we shall never come across a better," sighed our Cossack. "He is to come back to-morrow. You must see and speak to him; a splendid man; doesn't smoke opium, and is an officer into the bargain. He has obtained two steps, but that does not interfere with his being able to do everything. He says he can saddle and unsaddle a horse, cook, wash, and do anything you please."

"A singular individual," thought I to myself, "an officer who can wash linen and cook." We certainly required an intelligent man who could take down the answers correctly in Chinese to questions which subsequently had to be trans-

lated into Russian. We had kept on our pilot Van, who, although an excellent "navigating officer," was altogether unsuitable on dry land, and he admitted this himself, recommending us to look out for a substitute.

The Chinese in question duly returned next day, bringing a most satisfactory answer to a question that Matoussowsky had given him to solve by way of proving his powers, and we therefore decided on keeping him for the whole journey if possible. His name was Tan, but being an officer we called him Mr. Tan (Tan-Loe). His salary was to be twenty-five roubles a month (about £4). We had nothing to think of for him, as he even had a horse of his own. This Tan-Loe was a real treasure, very intelligent, well-behaved, honest, civil, and obliging; he took charge of everything, and never thought he was demeaning himself. He was a married man, and lived in tolerable comfort; therefore it was not from necessity that he entered our service, but in order to extend his knowledge and acquaintance with foreigners he wished to travel, and had decided on going to Russia, leaving his wife, his home, and a child of five years old. He only asked to be given the chance, and to have his return guaranteed.

Tan became our friend and right-hand man. As long as we stayed in the town he continued living at his own home, but came regularly every morning to receive our orders and to do our commissions. He seemed intuitively to guess our special interest during our walks, and showed us much that was interesting, and amongst other things saltpetre works, of which I should never otherwise have guessed the existence.

The master of the works, having been apprised the night

before by Tan of my intended visit, most kindly put his time at my disposal, and explained the whole process of obtaining salt and saltpetre, which is certainly simple enough. They are extracted from the rubbish of old houses, diluted in great quantities in square stone-built tanks which have an outlet for the water to run through to a pit below. This water is then boiled in cauldrons. The boiling water passes through a pipe into a basin, whence it is distributed into wooden pans.

The saltpetre is deposited in crystals on the surface, and the salt obtained by evaporation after the saltpetre is taken off. About ten workmen were occupied in this factory. They could not explain to me how much salt, or saltpetre, they extracted from a given amount of rubbish.

On another occasion Tan took me to see the manufacture of idols in a temple, on the very spot they are to occupy. Although the sculptors were absent, I was able to form some idea of their style of workmanship, of which the first process is carving in wood, which is then covered with clay mixed with tow. The idols I saw were scarcely begun, but they gave me a better notion of the talent of the artists than they would have done later on, when, owing to errors of detail, and the gaudy colouring employed in obtaining a terrible expression of countenance, the idols become simply hideous.

Near this temple was a school, with a large well-lit hall opening on to the courtyard, from which it was separated by a very slender grating. The tables were placed against the wall, with forms at each for one or two pupils. A dozen scholars repeated their tasks aloud, swaying themselves back-



A SCHOOL AT HAN-TCHONG-FOU.

wards and forwards. Two rather aged schoolmasters came forward to receive me, and begged me to take a seat. I apologised for being unable to carry on a conversation with them, and set to work to sketch the establishment.

The children continued their lessons, casting a look at me from time to time. The fear of being punished kept them from playing any trick. The punishments are much the same as ours; the masters pull their pupils' ears, use the ferule, and whilst I was there made one kneel down. They cannot shake them by their pigtails, as children do not wear them, but have their hair plaited in a lot of little tresses.

Most of these little creatures looked unhealthy, but some were quite plump, and one, aged six or seven, interested me considerably. With the gravest expression he followed the hieroglyphics in his book with his finger, pronouncing them aloud and then repeating them by heart. He did not deign to look at me; only once his glance fell upon me as it might on one of the pictures on the wall. I tried to make him laugh by pulling a face at him, but it was quite in vain. When my drawing was finished I went up to him and asked him how old he was. I purposely used the word *gao-schou* which is used to old people, instead of *tzi-souï*, which is used to children and adults. This *gao-schou* made the schoolmaster laugh, but the child replied solemnly "seven," and indicated the number on his fingers. I praised his industry, and said he would "follow the great path," according to the Chinese expression, which means that he will make his way in life.

"*Hao-ra-tzy*," (good boy) said his masters, and then told

him to make his bow to me. The child came down off his bench, put himself in front of me, and joining his little hands, together lifted them up over his head, and made a low bow. I had no sooner gone than he went back to his place and continued his lesson, swaying himself backwards and forwards as before. We shall of course never hear what becomes of this little man, even were he to become Prime Minister, which is by no means unlikely; it would be all the more impossible to find out, from the fact that the Chinese change their names perpetually. There is no scholastic year in China. Neither are there any holidays; the school remains open all the year round, from sunrise till ten in the morning, when the children go off to breakfast. They come back towards midday, and work till five o'clock. In summer the children attend in the evening instead of in the afternoon. They are received at any time of year, as each scholar is taught quite separately from the others. There is no general instruction, but the master tries to economize time by teaching several pupils at once. When a child begins going to school the master teaches him the first few hieroglyphics, and the child repeats them aloud until he first knows them on his book, then by heart, and so on. The lesson-books are the same throughout the empire. I am no judge as to their value, but this uniformity of instruction links the immense population of the oldest empire in the world most firmly together. Since one of the pupils of Confucius composed a book, which has ever since been the manual of primary instruction, every well-educated Chinaman has passed several years of his childhood swaying him-

self backwards and forwards before this work. Each shouts out his lesson, the master lending an attentive ear, and correcting those whose pronunciation is defective.

The pupil who knows his lesson comes to the master, and with many bows puts his book on the table, turns his back on him, and begins reciting what he has learnt. He is then given other verses, until he has learnt all the one hundred and seventy-eight lines of the *San-Tzy-Tzyn*; after which he passes to the second manual, *Sy-Schou*, or the four books of classics; then to the *Tzynn*, or the five sacred books, which completes the curriculum. To give the reader some idea of the contents of these books, I ought to mention that the first is a sort of encyclopædia, beginning with these words, "When man was first created, he was a saint." Then it speaks of what man is in the present day, of the necessity of knowledge and education, the various methods of instruction, the importance of social duties; of the three torches, the four seasons, the five elements, and the five virtues (philanthropy, justice, the ability to support oneself, intellect, and truthfulness); the six samples of corn, the six classes of domestic animals, the seven vices, the eight notes in music, the nine degrees of affinity, universal history, and the order of the succession of their dynasties. In it are given examples of illustrious ancients, and of the honours they obtained by their work, and it relates how one of them, having no paper, wrote on the trunks of bamboos; how another wound his pigtail round a beam to keep himself awake; how another, to attain the same result, ran an awl into his side.

Here are some passages which may give a general idea of the tone of these books: "On the importance of a quiet mind. One must first discover one's aim, and then decide on the manner of succeeding in that aim. After deciding on one's course of action, one attains that peace of mind which nothing can disturb. This being attained, one can reflect and decide on the nature of things; and by reflection the desired perfection is reached." Or again: "Duty exists for every one; for high and low. To correct and improve oneself is the only true basis of all moral development."

"He who is not puffed up by the knowledge that owing to his efforts his country is well governed, is all the greater and worthier of respect."

"He who sees his country ill governed, and yet remains faithful unto death, becomes greater and worthier of respect."

I had no opportunity of visiting any higher educational establishment.

There are no girl's schools, so that, with few exceptions, the women are illiterate.

It must be remarked that the women are not purposely deprived of instruction, but they cannot consecrate ten years to it (from seven to seventeen), which are scarcely sufficient to initiate them in the principles unfolded by the standard authors. Women who have attained the higher standards of education are very highly esteemed by their fellow-citizens, and literary, philosophical, poetical, and learned women are all to be met with.

The condition of women in China does not seem enviable

to a stranger, but apparently they easily accustom themselves to it. I came to this conclusion through observing the life of four women who lived in the same house as we did. It was the household of a small official named Tjou. He had two wives, a daughter, and a daughter-in-law, the wife of his eldest son. The women stayed all day shut up in their little courtyard behind our quarters, with the exception of Tjou's elder wife, who occasionally went out. After some time, in my capacity of doctor, I had free admittance into their house, and they became used to me, and cooked, sewed, or looked after the children without taking any notice of me.

The oldest of the two wives was a tall, stern sort of woman, rather advanced in years, and with a loud deep voice, which made our Cossacks give her the nickname of "Mrs. General." She might easily have been mistaken for Tjou's mother, for the Chinese, who wear neither beard or moustache, always appear younger than their actual age.

"Mrs. General" managed her husband and the whole household. Tjou was not very clever or well educated, although he was a non-commissioned officer; but soldiers are not expected to be highly educated. Education is considered unnecessary to advancement in a military career, and without any examination whatever they are able to win promotion if they have distinguished themselves in action. Brilliant service is all that is necessary, and later on we made acquaintance with mandarins decorated with the red button and yet absolutely illiterate.

Tjou's wife governed the house and kept everyone in

order. She smoked all day long, scolded or admonished her rival, her daughter-in-law, or her husband, and occasionally brought them to tears. She also favoured her boy, aged ten, with little blows on the the head from her bamboo chibook. The blows were not severe, as he was her favourite; this punishment was inflicted for disobedience, or if he asked too



ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE

"MRS. GENERAL."

often for something to eat. Being mistress of the house, she took the cooking and washing under her own especial care. "Mrs. General" always had on a severe expression, but I have sometimes seen her in a good temper. She would then try to be playful and to talk to me, but I was not able to understand her. Sometimes she would give me gentle taps with her pipe whilst I was drawing the court.

The other two ladies were not the least Chinese in their type, and had I met them in Russia, for instance, I should never have taken them for Chinese. They had all sat to me, much against their inclination; but Tjou, having become my friend, insisted on their complying with my request. He made his wife and daughter-in-law understand that they were to stay quiet in front of me as long as it should be necessary. The first, who was very young, near-sighted, and lazy, appeared totally indifferent, and continued sewing during the sitting. The other made faces and grumbled the whole time. As for the young lady, she was quite afraid her portrait would not be taken, and inquired when I should be able to do it. I achieved "Mrs. General's" portrait on the sly, as no one dared order her about. These women resembled our farm-servants both in their manners and in their dirt. The young girl had itch on her hands, and probably all over her, as she scratched herself unmercifully.

I spent a whole morning drawing their little courtyard, which was so narrow and darkened by overhanging roofs that fresh air and sunlight never reached it. The air was foul and charged with miasma, and I could never have remained in it without my cigar. It was not surprising that the health of the inhabitants was unsatisfactory.

That day they ate their dinners whilst I was there. The little boy awaited the meal with impatience, and kept on asking whether they were not going to begin soon, to which the "General" replied that he should have no dinner at all if

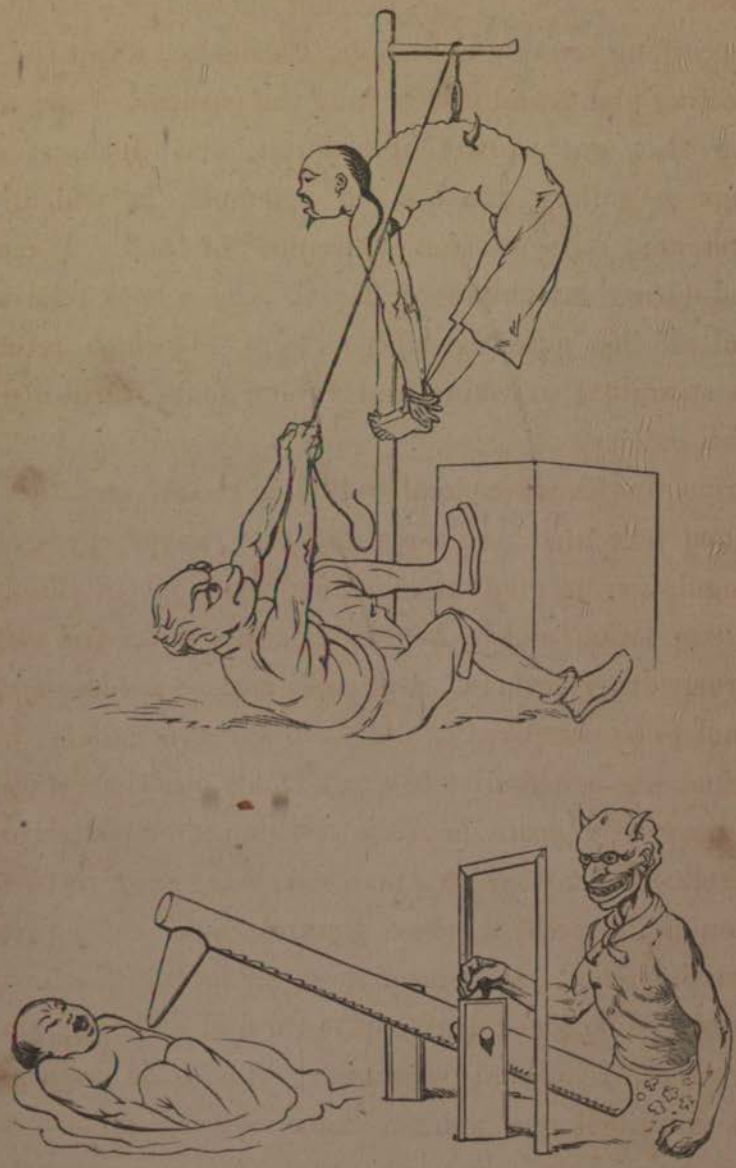
he were troublesome. He must have been quite aware of the worth of this threat, for he was the first to be helped to a cup of rice, with beans, cabbage, and a bit of bacon. He swallowed the boiling rice in one moment to insure a second supply; and the women ate quite as greedily, aided by their chopsticks, one seated on the threshold, another standing. "Mrs. General" alone had a chair. A monkey chained in the corner was also given its portion of rice, which it stuffed into its cheeks, and then took out little by little with its fingers.

This nourishment was of course insufficient, and they consequently got up regularly during the night to eat. I used to hear them frizzling grease or butter; one could have imagined an ox was being roasted. They occasionally got up twice in the night.

Meanwhile our fellow travellers were having their property dried and cleaned, and were tasting the various samples of tea they had bought. Our chief finished his report upon our journey, our occupations and various commercial items, chiefly concerning the tea trade.

We came to the conclusion, after much tea-tasting, that the tea grown here, although excellent in quality, was not to be compared to the tea generally used in Russia, and that as it would never be popular in that country, there could be no use in mentioning it. We did not even see any plantations in the neighbourhood, and thought we were shortly to visit the province of Sse-Tchouan, where we expected to find a great abundance of natural produce, a magnificent capital, a sympathetic people, and most beautiful scenery.

But we were suddenly informed that our route was altered,



THE TORMENTS OF HELL, FROM THE GALLERY OF THE TEMPLE OF HAN-TCHONG-FOU.

and that our steps were no longer to be directed southwards

to Sse-Tchouan, but to the northwest, which meant towards Russia.

According to my usual habits, I wandered about the town collecting plants and insects from the gardens. I saw everything that was worthy of interest, and amongst other things a gallery attached to a temple, in which were represented the various sufferings of hell. I remembered during my childhood having read a book relating in detail all the sufferings and tortures to which criminals were submitted in China, and I now found them depicted in this gallery.

Crime in China is punished with death, and the condemned executed in three different ways: by gradual strangulation, to give the soul time to get out of the body, by decapitation, and by quartering; this at least is asserted by trustworthy authors. But these various modes of death are not to be compared to the horrors of this gallery. One criminal was boiled alive in a cauldron; elsewhere a woman was squeezed to death between two stones, or pulverized in a mortar; and farther on a man was being sawn in two, &c. Although ill-executed, these pictures could not be viewed with indifference. In some of them the faces of the tortured expressed the highest degree of terror and suffering, and in others, indifference and resignation. The gods assisting at these executions were painted under various aspects. Some appeared to pay no heed to what was going on around them; others looked severe and threatening; some repulsive and dreadful.

Among these gods, executioners, and criminals, there was

an intermediate order of beings, sometimes represented as carrying a human head suspended from their shoulder, like a travelling bag.

According to the popular belief, these have a good deal of influence in the other world, and numerous offerings are presented to them, such as lighted candles. The Chinese also sprinkle their heads with the blood of animals that have been sacrificed, principally that of cocks, and anoint their lips with oil.

One may also see those who have been decapitated addressing prayers to the gods, with their heads tied by the hair to their sides.

We had numerous visitors, either merchants or sick people; neither did the Christian doctor we had met on the Han forget to come and see us.

Knowing how much importance the Chinese attach to feeling the pulse, I begged my colleague to show me their manner of doing it, and to give me a professional opinion on the state of my health.

The doctor took my hand, pressed three fingers on the forepart of my arm, and shutting his eyes began his examination. During at least ten minutes he kept his fingers on my arm, changing their position, going up and down it, touching it as lightly as if he were playing the violin, and putting on an air of deep thought during the whole process. This fingering, with the solemn face and mysterious expression, could not fail to influence the patient, especially if he happened to be ignorant.

During the time that my colleague was shutting his

eyes and trying to guess what was going on in my body, I said to myself, "My friend, you are a charlatan if you do all this without any faith, and just to impose upon a fellow-creature; but if you really have confidence in your knowledge, I can see, were it only by the way that you feel my pulse, that you do not know very much of medical science."

When he had finished his examination, he informed me that my health was in a normal condition. It would have been interesting to hear him define an illness, supposing there had been one. What confidence could anyone have in a doctor who pretended to know by a woman's pulse whether her child would be a boy or a girl?

Thanks to the public ignorance, the Chinese doctors, who are real impostors, can exist and make a good living. I was curious to know what they charged for a visit, and found that they got from 10 to 50 kopecks (from 4d. to 1s. 6d.); the highest fee being 2 roubles (6s. 8d.)

One day another doctor came to see me. He was of a certain age, and was said to be the best doctor in the town. He brought me his grandson, and begged me to treat his complaint, none of his own remedies having had any effect. The boy had an abscess deeply embedded in his hip, which only required lancing. His grandfather had treated it with internal remedies, and was surprised at the want of effect. I proposed operating, and he at once consented to my doing so, which was a great proof of confidence in a foreign doctor. The operation was performed in the yard, and the boy at once became easier, for his suffering was at an end. He

came back nearly well some days afterwards, with his grandfather, bringing me presents of tea, fruit, pastry, and cakes. The old man prostrated himself to the ground, lavishing praises upon me, and expressing boundless gratitude. I did not quite understand all he said, but probably the habitual phrases used to doctors came into play. "You find out disease like a spirit. The benefactions you confer on the world are like the return of spring; you are the rival of Ho and of Houen" (celebrated doctors in olden times). He departed, probably imagining that foreign doctors are equally successful in the treatment of all other diseases.

I had numerous clients in this town, where I acquired celebrity and general consideration. Everybody knew me, and the sick being aware that I accepted no money, tried to testify their gratitude by presents, which generally consisted of food, and they sometimes brought me live fowls. Some sent them before they came for a consultation.

One of my patients, who was a mandarin, came one day and asked me to go with him to a theatrical representation, given near a temple, on the occasion of a local fête. I think I have already mentioned that there are no resident companies in China. The actors wander in troupes or societies from one place to another, under various conspicuous and amusing titles, such as "Happiness," "Blessed Society," "Society of the famous apparition."

They give representations in rich private houses, or on stages raised near the temples to celebrate their special holidays. We were accompanied by two police agents, who made way for us though the crowd of spectators standing,

sitting, or squatting about on the ground. There was no entrance money. My neighbours began to crowd around me, but the police scattered them with deafening shouts.

Order could not be disturbed, as it did not exist. The spectators walked about, talked, stretched themselves, sucked sugar-canes, smoked their pipes, and the noise never ceased during this open-air play. This is probably why their theatrical music is so noisy; no other could drown the general uproar. I looked on without knowing the least what the piece was about, and could see nothing amusing in the hideous grinning faces, the gestures and steps of these comedians, or the way they used their wrists, which being particularly supple, were therefore adapted to every kind of movement.

The musicians were placed at the back of the stage, and when the action of the play did not require their music, they smoked or sucked sugar-canes and drank tea, which did not in the least interfere with the quarrels, the love-making, and suicide of the actors, or with their long solemn monologues.

No curtain, no decorations, no pauses between the acts. The piece was played without an interlude from beginning to end, and the scenes were all shifted in the sight of the audience. If, for instance, a flame had to be represented, a man climbed up a ladder, emptied a packet of inflammable powder into the air and set it on fire with a piece of paper. In the courtyard tea-tables were arranged under tents, and even in the precincts of the temple, whilst barbers vigorously plied their trade in front of the stage.

The Chinese consider that it enhances the enjoyment of the play if they can be shaved or have their pigtail combed out whilst it is going on.

I went up into the surrounding gallery to try and make a drawing of the scene, but the love of art is so strong in the Chinese that they threw themselves upon me in a body, and I was forced to desist. Our chief invited the theatrical company of twenty members to come and be photographed the following day. The actors brought their costumes in chests, dressed themselves up as if for the play, and were then photographed. The price agreed upon for the half-day they spent with us was 5,000 sapeques or about 17 shillings.

Besides this company we came across wandering minstrels, comprising an old man and his two daughters. But we saw neither acrobats nor conjurors. These appear to be rare in China, and those that exist are not at all skilful.

Great varieties of people begged all sorts of things from us. Some asked us to procure their promotion; others had grievances, and begged us to plead for them at the tribunal. This was brought about by a report having got abroad that Sosnowsky was all-powerful. It seems that he had been in the habit of saying that he had only to say the word to Djoun (some governor) to insure that the latter would at once take a button and decorate the individual in whose favour he had spoken. Moreover the lanterns at the entrance of our house had something to do with this belief in the all-powerfulness of our chief. These two lanterns, which had been ordered by him, had the name and position of the tenant

inscribed upon them; it was probably by mistake that the title of governor-general (*tziaan-tzunn*) had been added, which some of the Chinese were sufficiently credulous to believe to be Sosnowsky's real rank. Another circumstance that may have fostered this error in the minds of the inhabitants was the appearance one day of old Siuï with a blue button surmounting his hat. Old Siuï was only a simple shopman, and behold him promoted to the rank of colonel! This unlucky button had been stuck on his hat by mistake.

Our stupid landlord asked for promotion on the strength of this, as if he could easily confer it. These requests were not merely addressed to the chief, but to us as forming part of his suite; everyone begged us to intercede on their behalf, and offered us presents of all sorts—pieces of silk, saffron from Thibet, tea, swallows' nests, &c. We quite dreaded these applicants, and were obliged to dismiss them without hearing their requests, and to give orders to the Cossack to explain that we had no influence in their country.

The local authorities were beginning to ask when we were to leave the town, and questioned us several times on the subject. Towards the end of our stay they again began to supply us with good dinners, and sometimes sent two editions in one day. These dinners were sent out in the most original fashion. The meal comprised ten dishes, or rather bowls, arranged on a tray formed like a shallow box. Several men carried it through the town on poles slung across their shoulders; if a roast fowl was included in the meal, it was

stuck on the tip of a kind of immense pitchfork raised high in the air, and carried behind the first set of servants—a very novel and amusing way of dishing up roast duck. Our ingots of silver were brought to us in the same way from Pekin. Two soldiers brought nearly a hundred pounds' weight on poles from which was hung a plank, with the boxes containing the money balanced upon it, and covered with pomegranate branches in full blossom. Red is the emblem of joy and happiness, and is also used to express all manner of good wishes.

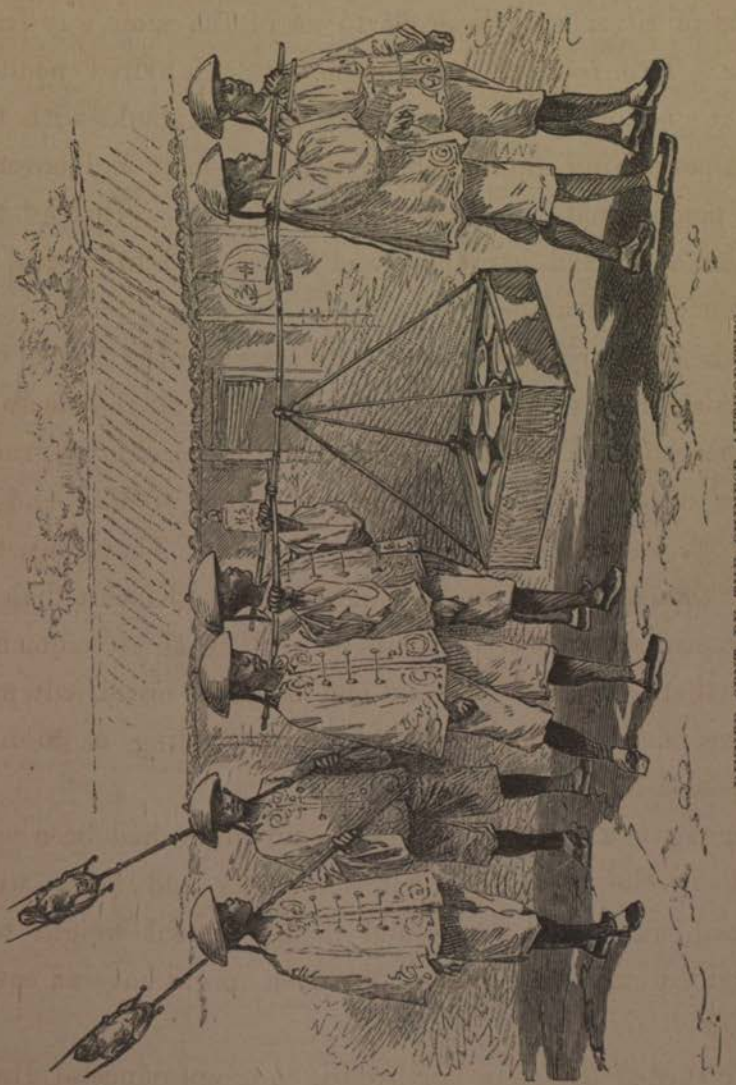
If the mandarins were anxious to ascertain the day of our departure, it was only that they might take all the measures indispensable for our safety during our approaching journey.

The start was at last fixed for the 19th of May, and on the 16th we paid our brief farewell visits. They consisted of our thanks, recited by Andreïewsky in the Kiachta dialect, and repeated by Siuï in Chinese. "The chief commands me to thank you for your aid and help, for bread, salt, and lodging, and all your attention; for enabling us to hire horses at a moderate cost," &c.

Our party started on horseback, and mules had been procured for the baggage. All the chests and boxes were weighed, and noted down, and then the total weight was subdivided among the mules, that each might have an equal share.

We turned our steps northwards to the province of Han-Sou. We were a large party: our landlord, invited by Sosnowsky, two servants, one of whom, being a clever locksmith, had announced that he intended going to Russia to

perfect himself in his art; the great Tan-Loe and Liu-Ba, our attendant and a man hired to carry the box containing



DINNER SENT BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES.

our notes, the instructions, and my drawings, as this seemed the most secure way of taking them. I ought not to forget

a monkey presented by our landlord, in anticipation of the promotion promised at Lan-Tcheou, a parrot which a patient had given me, and a squirrel the photographer had acquired during our voyage on the Han, and which, after being shipwrecked on the Loun-Tan Rapids, had been casually fished up, having clung to a cabin door.

CHAPTER II.

Plain of Han-Tchong-Fou—Town of Mian-Sian—Mountains—Ruins of Lo-Yan-Siañ—Village of Pei-Fei-Siañ—Surgical Operation on the High-road—Inns—Town of Tzing-Tchoou—Visit to the Authorities—Brutality of a Police Agent.

We were to travel across North-Western China and the vast desert of Mongolia on our return to Russia, and leaving the basin of the Yan-Tze-Kiang, were to cross the Tzing-Ling-Schan chain of mountains to reach the basin of another river, the Houang-Ho (Yellow River), pursue this valley as far up as the town of Lan-Tcheou-Fou; cross another chain to the north of the valley, and then proceed along the plain of Central Asia as far as the Celestial Mountains, behind which the steppes stretched out to meet the range of the Altaï Mountains.

May 20th. Sunrise. Pure unclouded atmosphere. The recent rains had cooled the air. The small courtyard belonging to our house was full of life and bustle with the final packing going on; endless noise and commotion; one giving orders in Russian, which the Chinese failed to comprehend, another settling the accounts and last payments, and a third busy writing letters. Some were packing up the various chests left open to the last; others, quite ready to start, waited quietly smoking their pipes, or quenching their thirst with tea.

Notwithstanding the early hour the heat was very great, and we eagerly sought any available shade. At last it came to loading the beasts; the officers and soldiers forming our escort were ready, and we decided on starting.

With eight policemen on foot, and helping to carry our things, we sallied forth into the street. The crowd was quiet and respectful; our acquaintances bade us farewell, or waved their hands to us, and we soon left the town and suburbs, and found ourselves in the midst of fields of wheat and cotton. The rice-fields seemed like vast mirrors lying on the ground, for they had just been flooded, and in places the labourers were up to their knees in the water; elsewhere little groups thrashed the corn exactly as we do in Europe.

The whole plain of the Han-Tchong-Fou was now unfolded to our eyes. Celebrated for its fertility as well as its teeming population, the Chinese have called it "paradise," but that it could scarcely be to every one, as I remarked that most of the inhabitants seemed sickly, and many suffered from eye-disease, or were nearly blind.

This immense plain was enamelled with farms, villages, pretty temples, and groups of trees, principally palms (*Chamærops*), peaches, and apricots; numberless canals with grassy banks watered the land in every direction, and little stone bridges devoid of parapets made the path easy to the traveller.

Soon we stopped, that our colleagues might overtake us, and at last our party was complete. Four soldiers carried in a palanquin the mandarin who was to escort us to the next village, and walked even faster than our horses. Then

came an escort of eight men in uniform, carrying arms which resembled halberds or lances, then sixteen men of the police force, and finally a caravan of thirty mules loaded with our baggage. The drivers walked beside their beasts, sunburnt and dusty, and cooled themselves with fans like our ladies at home. One soldier carried my parrot, another led Sosnowsky's little monkey, but the poor beast was soon tired, so the soldier took it up and carried it.

The caravan continued its way undeterred by the almost tropical heat, which only became endurable when the sun had set behind the mountains. We approached a big village, where our quarters had already been secured by the Chinese, and every one rejoiced at the prospect of resting after such a day of bustling about and fatigue. But to the general disgust this was not to be, as the chief announced that we were not to halt before the next village, ten miles off.

In vain the Chinese protested, saying that this order would upset all the arrangements already made for our comfort. Willing or unwilling, we were obliged to go on. Before nightfall we forded a wide stream; then our old acquaintance the Han, which at this point was neither wide nor deep, but still navigable.

The village in which we wanted to halt was now far behind us, night had overtaken us, we were dreadfully tired, but still continued on our way. At last we reached another village, surrounded by a wall, where nothing having been prepared for us, we had to search about for shelter. Rather than spend the night in the streets, we turned our steps towards an inn.

Disgusted by the disdain with which their efforts for our comfort had been met, the Chinese showed no further anxiety as to our fate. They soon vanished in the darkness, and most probably were much better housed than we were. I sat a long time on my horse in the middle of the courtyard, where each was busy with his own affairs, and paid no heed to us. At last Tan took my horse and showed me where I was to go, saying, "Bad house, not at all good."

I entered a sort of shed. The walls were blackened with smoke; it was lit up by a nightlight, and one half was filled to the roof with straw. The other was occupied by an enormous *kang*, big enough to hold twenty people. A table and two stools were brought, tea and eggs purchased, and then there was nothing for it but to throw ourselves down on the *kang*, which had perhaps been tenanted by beings of very doubtful cleanliness the night before.

May 21*st*. I got up betimes, and found our soldiers already waiting for us Wishing to secure a little time, I took three I had known at Han-Tchong-Fou and started. My companions walked well, notwithstanding the heat. These beardless young fellows, in their broad-brimmed straw hats and wide garments, looked more like women than soldiers.

We were still on yesterday's plain. Wheat and vast poppy-fields on every side, and notches in most of the poppy-heads for extracting the opium. Fine trees and shrubs lined the road, which was more like an avenue in a private park than an ordinary highway.

"This is Mian-Sian," said one of my guides, and I saw a wall, roofs of houses, and a ten-storied tower, through the

branches of a group of trees at the foot of a hill. We shortly afterwards reached the suburbs of the town, where rooms had been prepared for our reception. These we found to be a great contrast to the shed we had inhabited the night before. The windows were covered with fresh paper, the beds were clean, and we had a little narrow table and benches. Whilst my colleague slept I arranged the plants I had gathered for my herbarium, and then took a turn in the town. Going through the gate of the grey wall, I came on an immense space covered with weeds and ruined heaps of brick and plaster. This was the first monument of the civil war. The surrounding wall was all that was left; not the smallest vestige of a house was spared. The conflagration set agoing by the insurgent Mahometans had in a few hours destroyed the work of centuries. It was ten years since the destruction of the town of Mian-Sian, and the inhabitants had abandoned the old site and rebuilt the town, which I had mistaken for a suburb, outside the walls. In the old town they now grew wheat, maize, and other cereals.

At this stage our escort was changed; the soldiers came to take leave of us, and made their genuflections. They each received eight kopecks (less than twopence), and returned to Han-Tchong-Fou.

May 22nd. We now approached the mountains, which were cultivated to their topmost summit, many of the fields being arranged in terraces. The soil is clay, and of a yellowish red or a greyish green.

Written in 1874.

On our road were numerous villages shaded by very old trees, which greatly added to the beauty of the landscape. I will only describe one small village on the Pei-Ma-Ho, and hidden in the foliage of poplars and pomegranates. A small water-mill was at work, and I stopped to contemplate the tranquil existence led by a handful of men unknown to the world at large, utterly ignorant of it in return, and caring still less for it. The mill appeared to be in full-swing; the women were busy washing, others were arranging wheat in little cups for domestic use. Farther on two men had just killed and hung a pig upon a tree. They were now beating it vigorously, as this was supposed to render its flesh tender and more delicate in flavour. Hens and chickens, ducks, cows, dogs, and sows with their sucklings wandered around, the latter closely resembling the small Chinese, which their mothers often nurse till they are two or three years old. At this very place I saw two children run away to play after being suckled at their mother's breast.

The road gradually ascended, and we soon found ourselves surrounded by mountains; but the country remained equally populous. At every step we met Chinese adorned with broad-brimmed hats, and with straw shoes on their feet, each provided with a parasol, or rather umbrella, which was carried folded on the shoulder, their wraps and tobacco being fastened to them.

The ascent and descent were facilitated by steps cut out in the rocks. Nature presented a splendid sight, and we were enchanted by the luxuriant vegetation, but to my great regret it was impossible to stop. Hastily gathering what-

ever came within my reach, if I got behind the caravan I was always obliged to catch it up by forcing the pace, fatiguing both my horse and the soldiers of my escort, who thus got no time to rest or eat.

The steps we had to climb on horseback reminded me of those at Gouan-Goou; they were attended with the same dangers, and the least false step might have precipitated horse and rider to the bottom of the cliff. At last we safely reached the top of the mountain, where a temple arose under the shadow of beautiful trees. The portico stood out with its penthouse, and we had to pass under it, as there was no space beyond. The ceiling of the penthouse was supported by pillars, painted in the most brilliant colours. There was only one idol in the temple, and beside it a bell, which the *hechan* at once set ringing, to invite offerings from any passer-by. At the moment we happened to pass there was another priest in the temple, an albino with red eyes trying to avoid the light, by reason of his infirmity.

On leaving the temple we began to descend. Both in the villages and isolated houses I was struck by the absence of the Chinese type; these sunburnt peasants reminded me more of our Russian villagers, so much did they resemble our Ivans and Peters.

At first the soldiers could not understand why I was picking up every sort of thing so busily, but at last they got interested themselves, and helped me energetically in my researches. The people we met by chance did the same. I tried unsuccessfully to reach a plant above the path, and some people resting on the slope above at once got it for me,

and brought it down before I had time to ask them to do so. These attentions from simple country-folk were most pleasing; but as night was coming on I had to hasten after my companions.

In the village where we were to spend the night there were no rooms ready, the Chinese having arranged our halt at another spot. However, we were not long in finding quarters. Our dirty room was blackened with smoke, and the discomfort enhanced by its being shared by the owner and his family, who were only separated from us by a piece of matting, full of holes. It was suspended from the ceiling. But in point of fact we were all in the same room. But how were we to search for better on this rainy night? There was nothing for it but to resign ourselves, and remain where we were. Tan-Loe borrowed a lantern from a passer-by, who could not, however, leave it with us. The owner of the house then lit a bundle of shavings, but the dense pungent smoke would have suffocated us if we had not sent him away. He endeavoured to make up for his stupidity by bringing a lamp, which smoked and had a horrible smell, so we had to send him off again, and thus we remained in darkness until our candles could be fished out of the baggage. Then with that curiosity peculiar to all travellers, I approached the mat to see what was happening on the other side. A sad spectacle greeted me—profound misery; two nearly naked children lying on the floor ill, a third in the mother's arms; a deformed old woman, probably the grandmother, with a pipe between her teeth. There were a few bundles of rags, but not a chair or a bed. When our candles

were lit the old woman came in her turn to look through the mat at the people that heaven had sent to them in this night of rain. Fatigue and the rain had made us sleepy, but I had still a bird to stuff (*Genicus tancolo*, Gould), and to arrange the plants I had collected. I was undecided what to do, when the interpreter came to tell us that the intention was to photograph the neighbourhood in the morning, and that we should not start before eight o'clock. This news made me immediately decide on going to bed.

May 23rd. I was awoke at five o'clock in the morning by the drivers' screams and blows. Every one was ready to start. The weather was bad; it rained incessantly, and as it was impossible to photograph the "views of nature," as our interpreter expressed it, orders had been given for our immediate start. I had no time to arrange my plants, and had to throw away the bird, finding it impossible to work under such circumstances.

The road still wandered through the hills, and we reached a great height, without, however, attaining the highest summit of the chain dividing the plain of the Yan-Tze-Kiang on the south from that of the Houan-Ho on the north.

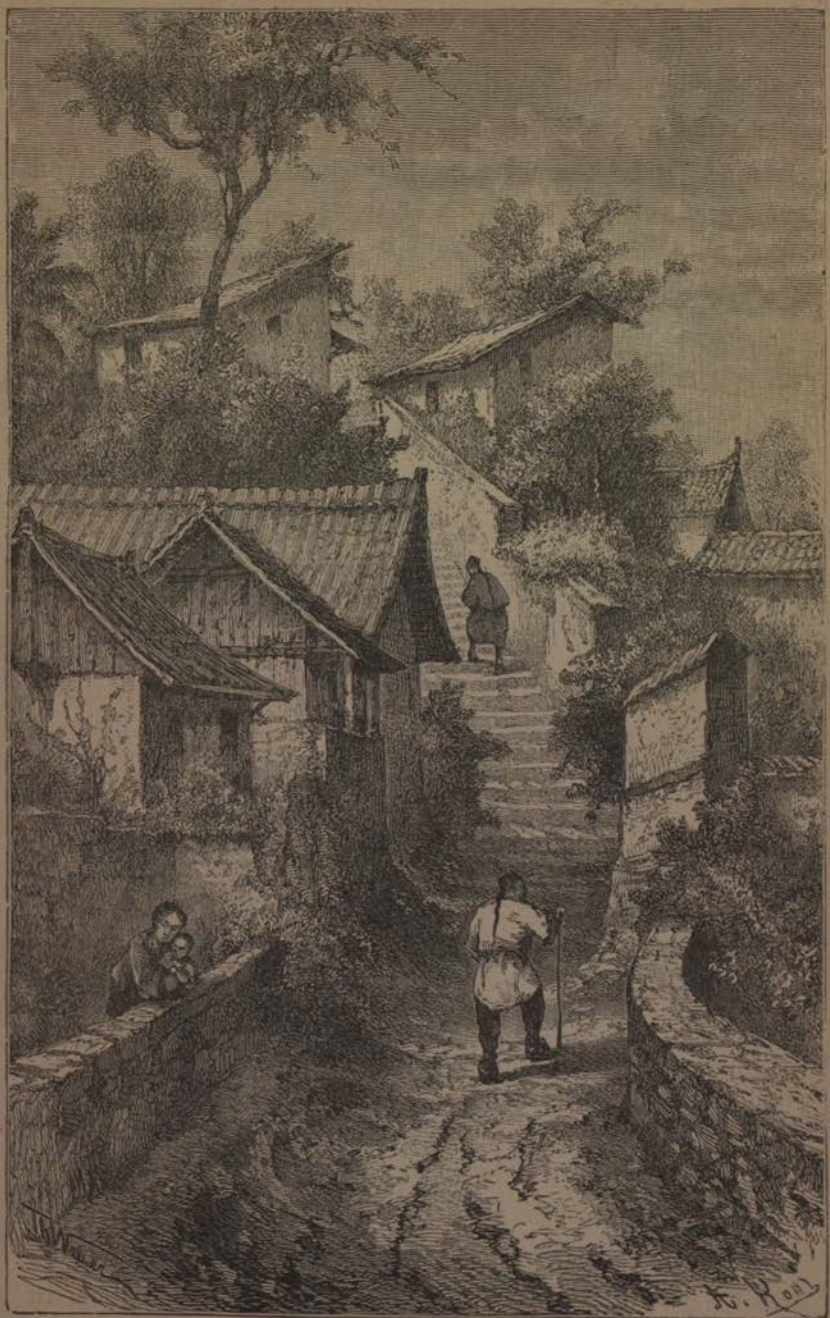
We now perceived the battlemented little town of Lo-Yan-Siañ on the mountain side, and farther on an enormous tower, which seemed almost to reach the skies. We forded a small river as limpid as crystal, and then climbed up to a terrace skirting the wall. This little town had met with a fate similar to that of Mian-Sian. On passing through the gate we seemed rather to have come out of the town than

to have entered it. The site was grass-grown; a few corn-fields and about ten houses, built since the war, were alone visible. "In China," said Matoussowsky, "there are no towns without walls, but it seems there are walls without towns."

The walls were quite intact, even the staircases where the wall sloped up the mountain-side, and so were the temples and barracks. Was the garrison insufficient to defend the town against the enemy? Did it defend itself to the uttermost? The Chinese are all aware that fortifications are of no great importance, for when hunger opens the gates there is no means of salvation or escape from a victorious enemy excited by opposition. Therefore they now build their towns outside the old walls.

On reaching the suburb, or rather the town constructed outside the wall, one of the soldiers took me to the lodgings prepared for us. A great crowd having assembled at the entrance, one of the police agents thought it necessary to announce our arrival in such a loud voice and with such screams that it would scarcely have been surprising if we had crushed at least ten of the most inquisitive, arriving as we did at full galop. The Chinese took fright and fled in every direction; it was so comical that to laugh was irresistible. When they got over their first alarm they all followed my example, with the exception of one man, who in his flight had tumbled into a pool of water, and was now grumbling and shaking off the wet.

May 24th. It still rained, and we started without knowing the length of stage we should have to travel, and unable in



VIEW IN LO-YAN-SIAŃ.

consequence to divide the time. The country was splendid, the vegetation very rich, the ground well cultivated; but notwithstanding all this the people were very poor. The slate houses had a miserable appearance.

The inhabitants manufacture paper from the *aralia* bark, and work in coal-mines.

I had a great wish to see a fine big house surrounded by a high wall which I had noticed close to the road as forming a strong contrast to the neighbouring huts. The gates were shut, but I sent one of my escort to ask permission, and he returned with a message begging me to enter, and took my horse by the bridle up the steps to the terrace leading to the entrance.

The master of the house, who was considerably advanced in years, came forward and begged me to enter, he himself following me. Two servants at once brought cups of tea for me and their master, and on my expressing a wish to see his establishment, he immediately consented, took me all over his house, and showed me several little courts with dwelling-rooms; but, to my great regret, the doors and windows were all shut. Everything was fresh; the gilding shone brightly, the panels with inscriptions at the sides of the doors, any quantity of stages with pots of flowers on them. Cleanliness and tidiness reigned throughout, but all seemed inanimate. "Absence of woman, absence of life." Everything would have looked quite different if a woman had appeared to take part in the conversation.

At last he led me into his little private room, and begged me to rest; but I was not tired, and understanding that he

had nothing more to show me, I was about to take my leave, when one of the servants whispered something to him, and the master then begged me, in the most charming manner, to leave him some souvenir of my visit, for instance, a drawing, which he should always cherish. This request pleased me, and I therefore procured a paint-brush and some Chinese ink, and pointing to the wall, asked his permission to draw on it, to which he assented with visible delight. I drew him a landscape with mountains, a river, and steamboat, and on another wall I sketched my own portrait. He gave me his thanks, and I said farewell, leaving him to reflect on my strange and unexpected visit.

I arrived at the village of Tié Tchann, where my companions were already installed. The photographer was taking views, Matoussowsky was drawing his map; the chief had finished what he had to do, and was settling to sleep. After refreshing myself and drinking tea, I stuffed two birds I had killed during the day, and dried my plants between blotting-paper. This took me a good while. The owner of the house and his servant had not gone to bed, probably out of civility, whilst I meanwhile impatiently awaited their departure, as they smoked and spat about the room incessantly.

May 25th. A beautiful morning; fine weather. We started early, and continued our ascent by little paths hollowed out in the rocks. The slope was so dangerously sudden and the paths so narrow, that to this day I wonder what happens when two caravans meet.

We reached the highest point of the natural line of demarcation between the two big rivers of China, to-day. A temple

had been erected on this spot, and was inhabited by several priests, whose fate I quite envied, for I would gladly have remained some time with them, the place being most interesting both from a picturesque and a scientific point of view. But we had no time to enjoy all this, and to our great regret made no halt.

I stopped, however, for a few moments to contemplate those valleys and well-cultivated mountains, the summits of which were covered with farms at a height of nine thousand feet. After gathering a few plants together, I descended into a narrow ravine, watered by a little rivulet, where I found our soldiers resting in the shade. They explained that we must take a rest, as we were about to climb a very high mountain; and we did, in truth, effectually begin a fresh ascent. The road went along the edge of such a precipice that it made one giddy to look over it. A river of considerable importance, called the Ta-Ho, bathes the foot of this mountain, from the heights of which I could see the small tributaries adding their emerald streams to the Ta-Ho; the slopes of the hills, with their flat green summits covered with grass; and fields of wheat and pasturage. The corn was ripe, and the harvest was going on around us.

A little farther on we could partially see the small town of Pei-Fei-Sañ, situated on the Ta-Ho. The Chinese crossed the river on their way to a great commercial village, built on the other side of the Ta-Ho. How small everything appeared! Men, houses, and boats were still at a great distance; no sound reached us, which at first seemed strange from a Chinese village. There was no breeze, and the heat was

insupportable. I felt sure that we should stop at Pei-Fei-Siañ till next day, and therefore hoped after dinner to go into the town with my paint-box and paper. I soon got there, and looked in every direction, but vainly, for any signs of my companions. On inquiring, I found that after a halt for breakfast they had continued their journey. This disgusted me immeasurably. I soon came upon Matoussowsky on the banks of the river, taking plans, with the Cossack, Tan-Loe, and the soldiers. Matoussowsky confirmed the information just given me.

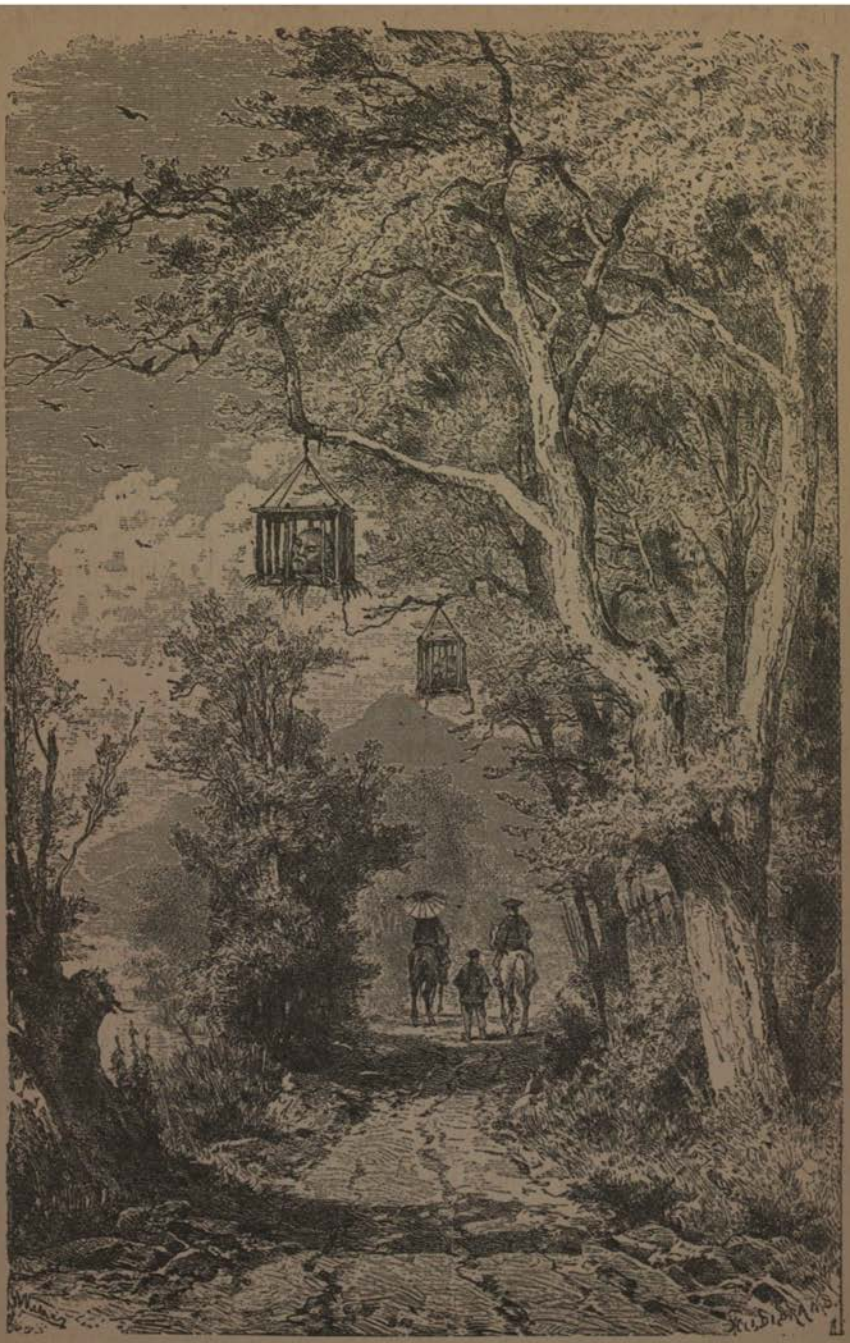
Why should we have been so hurried? Who forced us on in this way? Why were we here? Was it to be able to say, when we got back to Russia, that we had gone from one end of China to the other?

I was quite exhausted with heat and thirst, so I had some tea made, and then sent into the town for food. My thirst and hunger were satisfied, but the various cups of hot tea I had swallowed produced such a violent perspiration that my strength failed me. After taking a few sketches I was going to try and catch up the "scientific explorers of China," and obviate the reproach of being the cause of a "general delay," when one of the soldiers turned to me, calling out "Sir! Doctor!" pointed to a woman on her knees, bowing to the ground before me. Her hand and arm were swollen up to the elbow, and her suffering must have been great. A few cuts from a lancet would have sufficed to give instant relief, but as the operation might have taken longer than the usual time required, and as I was very hurried, I was unwillingly obliged to refuse to operate. But when the poor woman

and her husband again went on their knees, and begged me with tears to help them, "Come what may," said I to myself, "the chief cannot order me to be shot." I asked for my box of surgical instruments, but the soldier who had charge of them had left ages ago. I ordered clean rags to be brought to me, oil-cloth and water, and with my penknife operated in the sight of an attentive audience. The operation succeeded admirably, and the patient was immediately relieved. Both she and her husband testified the most heartfelt gratitude, and the spectators lifted their fingers in token of approval, repeating "Good doctor!" I must, however, own that I had felt rather nervous about operating before an ignorant and perhaps hostile crowd.

I jumped on my horse, and heard at least ten voices begging for assistance. I could only exclaim that I had no time, but their groans went to my heart, and I left Pei-Fei-Siañ sad and disconcerted.

I entered a ravine, from whence flowed a river the name of which I was unable to ascertain; it passed between two ranges of mountains resembling pillars for the support of heaven. It was bordered by beautiful trees which shaded our path. Multitudes of birds warbled in the branches, others skimmed about on the water; but in the midst of all this charm of nature we came upon a sight which formed a striking contrast—from the branches of an ash-tree swung cages with human heads in them. I must own that the sight of these heads with their closed eyes did not discompose me in the least, and the Chinese viewed them with absolute indifference. A passer-by told us that two young



ON THE ROAD BETWEEN PEI-FEI-SIAÑ AND TZING-TCHOOU.

men, scarcely twenty years of age, had set upon two merchants in broad daylight, and after robbing had assassinated them. Seized by the inhabitants, and unable to make their escape, they were given up to the police, condemned to death, and their heads exposed at the very place where the deed was committed.

In the course of the evening I reached the village where the rest of the party had already installed themselves for the night. At the entrance an inquisitive crowd was kept at bay by Sosnowsky's monkey much more effectually than by the police. Our quarters, which had been got ready beforehand, were large, comfortable, and clean; and the supper sent by the Commandant of the town of Hoï-Siañ, sixteen miles distant, comprised fifteen different dishes.

May 26th. Nothing is more delightful than an expedition over mountains, but also nothing more fatiguing, especially to the porters; the soldiers only carry trifles, and can often rest in the inns by the wayside.

I went into one of these inns to get some tea. The house was small, and faced the street. We were shown into a room provided with two or three tables and a few benches. At the back of the house were the kitchen, and a few private rooms for those who did not choose to mix with the public. A pan of water boiled on the fire, which an old man was keeping alight with a pair of bellows. The innkeeper, who was his own cook, was busy preparing the rations of vermicelli ordered by the soldiers, and accomplished this in the following manner:—Taking a bit of prepared paste, he rolled it into a strip on the table, and holding it at both

ends, stretched it out like a ribbon to the full length of both arms; then seizing it in the middle, he folded it in two, and stretched it out in the same way again and again; after a few minutes this had become vermicelli in his fingers. He struck it on the table, the threads separated, and the vermicelli was ready. He finally threw it into the pan of boiling water, whence another cook removed it with chopsticks in about two minutes, and filling the cups, added a bunch of herbs, a pinch of red pepper, and a small quantity of a red liquid with a bitter taste. The dish was like crawfish soup, and cost 12 sapeques.

The soldiers, following the usual custom, first asked me to taste it, and then swallowed the boiling vermicelli without waiting for it to cool. I found it burnt my throat to such a degree and was so bitter that I could not swallow it. There was brown sugar on the table for those who liked to add it to their food.

Proceeding on our way, we next came to the town of Hoi-Siañ, situated in a valley, and surrounded by rice-fields and gardens. The soldiers, who had partially undressed for walking, now began to put their things on, that they might present a good appearance on entering the town.

I met and bowed to a mandarin who was being carried in a palanquin, and shortly after met another mandarin riding, who dismounted the moment he saw me, and stood motionless. I could therefore do no less than follow his example, and beg him to get on his horse again. He then begged me to do the same, and after a struggle of mutual politeness, the Chinaman carried the day.

The Russian flag waved over the entrance of a house, where a silent and respectful crowd had assembled. I entered the yard, where my companions had already settled themselves; several of the police and some natives were walking up and down, the latter giving an impression that they had come on business, and not out of mere curiosity.

The governor (*tchi-siañ*) and another mandarin called upon us; the dinner was sent in by the chief of the district in separate detachments for the two establishments, and I specially thanked him for this attention. I know not how the delicate attentions of these mandarins are generally acknowledged, but on this occasion a pheasant shot during the day was all that was sent. Perhaps the shipwreck at Loun-Tan had to answer for this.

May 27th. One might really have imagined that an enemy pursued us, and that we were obliged to make forced marches. In the small hours we were roused with an order to start. If our zeal in accomplishing our geographical and commercial researches could have been known at St. Petersburgh, our efforts ought to have been well rewarded. It seems that the Chinese were supposed to hinder our projects, and it had been announced that if we accomplished the expedition without misadventure, this in itself would be considered an important result obtained.

For the first time in China I saw crackling biscuits sold, like those we make in Russia. I also noticed a most original ornament forming part of the head-dress of the women, and consisting of a little black boat made of horn, rather less than half a yard long, and fixed with big pins to the hair.

May 28th. We frequently came upon villages on the mountain-tops, surrounded with walls and with all the appearance of fortresses. These erections were newly built in expectation of invasion; but the villages were very numerous in the plains, and as I was passing through one of them an old woman brought me a folded paper, which turned out to be a line left by our interpreter begging me to go to her son, who had been bitten five years before by a wolf, and the wound had never healed. I dismounted, and followed the woman to a house shaded by very old lime and pear-trees. The boy was brought to me, and I found he had an immense open sore on his cheek, which had probably been neglected. After giving him the necessary remedies, and explaining, to the best of my ability, how they were to be used, they saw me off with many thanks and tokens of respect.

I next reached the village of Mou-Li-Tchen. A Chinaman, dressed in new clothes and in his best hat, came towards me, and without a word took my horse by the bridle and led me into a courtyard. To this I offered no resistance. Those around us maintained a respectful silence, and I only heard the words "foreign doctor."

Matoussowsky was already established in the courtyard into which I was triumphantly led. As I dismounted I remarked to him that we were travelling like the knight-errants in the olden days; everywhere on our journey kind folks offered us meat, drink, and lodging, as if by order of some beneficent fairy. This beneficent fairy was embodied in the local authorities and the inhabitants, who

were warned beforehand to have either tea or breakfast ready.

In this village the excise officer received us. Probably the expense was defrayed by the municipality, and certainly in the belief that the expenditure would be refunded. The breakfast was simple: eggs, new potatoes, and tea; but the great pull was in finding everything ready, and in not having to bother ourselves with searching for food.

The inhabitants were thin, poor, and ragged. These poor, overworked, and miserable people were very unlike the well-dressed Chinese depicted on the tea-chests, vases, and other Chinese articles. The master of the house received a few trifles, and prostrated himself before us. On our saying a few kind words to him before we left, he quite put us to shame by throwing himself at our feet. It was only their custom, consecrated by centuries, and was merely their equivalent for shaking hands.

In proportion as we advanced, the heights seemed more and more populated; and these villages, perched at such an altitude, became the principal point of attraction to me. I only sought an opportunity to go up to them.

May 29th. We passed through most picturesque spots, and through a forest full of insects and birds. A halt of a day in this place would have enabled me to make a varied and numerous collection almost without moving from one spot. Our journey might be compared to the stages prisoners travel in Russia, where they are forced to get over a given number of miles each day, or to the peregrinations of blind beggars; our existence and only amusement consisted in

eating, sleeping, paying a few visits, and receiving a certain amount of attention.

We went slowly on, and constantly came upon ruins in the valley and newly-built villages on the mountain-tops. We again saw two heads in cages; one had been there some time, but the other had evidently been placed there quite recently, and was that of a man of about thirty.

May 30th. The mountains began to diminish, and might now barely be called hills. We had left the mountain district. The character of the country had suddenly altered, and silence and solitude succeeded to the teeming valleys we greatly regretted having left behind us.

The fields were now deserted; from time to time only we descried a man, rake in hand, or leading a cart drawn by oxen. The fields on the slopes were levelled into terraces, on the steeper slopes black holes might be seen, caverns which were merely the remains of a certain kind of habitation. In the villages the number of fruit-gardens without any walls attracted my attention. The traces of war were to be seen in the surrounding ruins. Often only half a village remained; but on the other hand it was easy to see that the cemeteries had increased, as a great number of tombs of recent date had lately been added to the older graves.

For instance, we came upon a big square wall such as generally surrounded the villages; we entered the open gate; not a house, not a creature; the grass covered everything; about ten tombs were all that we could see. Half the inhabitants were buried beneath the sod, the rest had retired into the mountains to build a new village.

I went along slowly, accompanied by my ten soldiers, and towards evening reached the town of Tzing-Tchoou, where my fellow-travellers had already established themselves. The inhabitants hastened into the street to see another stranger, and screamed out "He is coming! he is coming!" The street I went along was pretty of its kind, thanks to the trees and frontage of some of the temples.

I was agreeably surprised by the cleanliness of our quarters. The walls were newly papered white, the rooms clean, the courtyard equally so, and covered moreover with a white awning to protect us from the sun; the servants clean and anxious to please us, the dinner magnificent. Such were the attentions with which we were received.

These favourable conditions made us incline to stop on in this town for a few days, and it was therefore decided that on the morrow we should pay our respects to the local authorities.

Our visits were announced to take place at one o'clock, but, according to our usual practice, we were only able to accomplish four, and this wasted the whole afternooon for the rest of the mandarins.

We were carried in five palanquins, dressed in full uniform, and accompanied by soldiers and various minor officials. Our first visit was to the daï-tao (the prefect or governor), who, after keeping us waiting a long time at the door, sent a message that he was not at home. It was evident that this was not true, and that he declined to receive us.

After this well-deserved lesson in politeness we went to the tchi-siañ (the chief of the district), who also kept us wait-

ing at his door, but finally came out to meet us in the court-yard, according to Chinese etiquette. He made us sit down,



ENTRANCE TO A PRIVATE HOUSE, TZING-TCHOOU.

himself took the cups of tea from the tray, and after raising them over his head with both hands, gave one to each of us.

After this he sat down and waited for us to open the conversation. The reader can guess that the shipwreck was our chief subject, but we also begged to be shown the house Confucius had occupied 500 B.C.

He replied that it was in another town of the same name, in the province of How-Pé; neither could he show us the tomb of the Emperor Fucius, which was scarcely surprising, as the latter had reigned three thousand years before our era.

The mandarin, who was a clever man, thought it incumbent upon him to express surprise that strangers should know anything about Confucius, Fucius, or Fou-Si, but we still further surprised him by enumerating some of the dynasties which had reigned in China. He inquired what books we had read to know so much about his country, and Sosnowsky informed him that we had drawn our information from English, French, German, and Russian books.

We afterwards called on the head of the local army. This poor General certainly bore us no malice for having kept him waiting the whole day, as he received us immediately. The saying that one should never trust to appearances, was this time quite at fault. The General was so simple and ignorant that he even knew nothing of his profession. One of his aides-de-camp kept him from committing himself, and answered every question before he had time to speak. Sosnowsky asked, for instance, how many times a week his soldiers changed their linen? The mandarin searched about for an answer like a schoolboy who did not know his lesson, and when at last he did open his mouth his aide-de-camp had already replied.

To the question "How did the Li-Choun-Tau army fight against the Mussulmans?" the aide-de-camp replied "*Da jeñ bou-tchi-dao*" (the General does not know), and so on. I began to think that the General might perhaps be only a common soldier dressed up to personate the character for this occasion only, which I was told occurred every now and then in China. It appeared as if the aide-de-camp was there expressly to prevent the mandarin committing some great folly.

We had hardly got back to our own quarters before the *dao-taï* came to return our visit at the exact hour appointed, thus giving us an example of punctuality and a lesson we might have profited by. He spent half-an-hour with us and heard the account of the shipwreck, which our interpreters must have known by heart, but which, nevertheless, caused endless discussions between them.

Siuï having related that we had lost candles, sugar, and tobacco, Andreïewsky at once exclaimed, "No one asked you to relate what we lost; you had merely to say that we had lost a great deal."

Completely out of countenance, Siuï then tried to mend matters by adding "We did not lose tobacco, sugar, and candles, but articles of great value."

I was curious to know what impression the mandarins took away with them from these interviews, and our tongue-tied position was so disagreeable to me that I was really thankful when these visits came to an end. As soon as the *dao-taï* left us, I went into the town with Tan-Loe, and was surprised to see a woman on horseback and covered with a

thick black veil. The Chinaman who led the horse by the bridle had on a full dress straw hat, conical in shape and adorned with a red tuft.

Two roads led from Tzing-Tchoou to Lan-Tcheou-Fou, the one fit for carriages, and the other only fit for caravans or horsemen, but much shorter.

Sosnowsky had at first decided to follow the former, giving as his reasons the necessity of investigating this road which merchants made so much use of. Also its natural history made it interesting that we should go westwards towards the frontier of Thibet, and to cart our baggage was preferable as a less expensive mode of transit. The difference in time was only one day. Entirely of the same mind as our chief, we were delighted at the prospect of visiting a part of the country equally interesting and unknown. But subsequently, for no particular reason, the chief changed his mind; asserted that it was no use to go to Houn-Tcheng-Fou, and that by taking this road we should have to cross the Veï-Ho, which might detain us some days owing to the floods and the recent rains. He had, moreover, calculated that the bridle-path would save us 20 roubles.

He thought it necessary, however, to consult us before coming to any decision, and we strongly advocated the first plan. Matoussowsky even maintained from private information that the difference of cost was in favour of the first route. It was resolved to postpone the final decision until the following day.

After dinner I went into town to draw some interesting subjects, and was surrounded by crowds. Notwithstanding

my entreaties, the police whirled their clubs and struck out right and left. The noise and dust suffocated me; the hideous noise was distracting, and this, added to the heat, made it impossible to work.

I returned home and found that the carts were being loaded with our baggage. Just as we reached the porch, a clumsy and brutal police agent, in his efforts to drive off the Chinese, hit a passer-by on the head and smashed his spectacles, which broke on his face, but fortunately only hurt him slightly. The unlucky man seized the policeman by the wrist and would have dragged him to the *ya-mun*, had I not succeeded in re-establishing peace. After washing the wound I applied plaster, bandaged the eye, and in compensation for the broken spectacles offered him a *liang*, a piece of money the value of which varies with every province and almost every town. The police agent, on the other hand, had to go without the present, I usually gave all those who accompanied me.

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CHAPTER III.

Departure from Tzing-Tchoou—We Visit a Village in the Mountains—Dwellings in Caves—Town of Fou-Tzieng-Sieñ—Town of Nine-Youan-Siañ—We are Exhibited at so much a head—Ruins of Houn-Tcheng-Fou—Camp and Garrisons—"The Copper Button"—Arrival at Lan-Tcheou—Supply of Bread.

June 23rd. Putting our baggage on carriages, we left Tzing-Tchoou by the high road, accompanied by a dense crowd; the gates of the town were draped with flags in our honour. This town had not suffered from the war, but the neighbourhood was terribly devastated.

All the villages we came across were burnt to the ground, the walls of the fruit-gardens destroyed, and the trees were nothing but withered trunks. No living soul was to be seen in these ruins. After several hours' journey we passed through a village, and the soldiers drew my attention to its gates decorated with flags in our honour. Two Chinamen, in official hats, awaited us, and bending the knee, treated us with the highest deference. Farther on we were received by a group of armed inhabitants, one of them acting as standard bearer. After the usual greetings, we were invited to rest and breakfast in a house prepared for our reception. Breakfast over, we were once more escorted to the gates, where the inhabitants again prostrated themselves and bade us farewell.

Whilst my colleague was busy with his plans, I started on an expedition with my gun, and wounded an *Ibis Nippon*. It was a big bird, and my gun was loaded with shot. At the report, thousands of other birds, hidden in the branches of the trees, instead of flying away, perched on the lower branches, indignantly looking on and seeming to consult together how they could get rid of me.

I remarked many blue magpies with black heads (*Pica cyanea*), starlings (*Sturnus cineraceus*), and turtle-doves (*Turtur Sinensis*). A shot was evidently a novelty to them, as they showed no signs of fear. Very possibly they had never before seen a human being, for the wood was at a considerable distance from the road, and nothing remained of the nearest village but the crumbling walls, whence frescoes of the ancients seemed pensively to gaze upon this criminal act of destruction.

I returned to my colleague and the village where our carriages and baggage had halted, and, Sosnowsky having gone off to shoot, I profited by the opportunity to visit one of the villages in the hills, a thing I had long wished to do. Following a steep path winding round a hill, Tan-Loe and I reached a gate in a wall, too low to admit of the entrance of our horses, and behind this wall another path led up to the village on the summit of the hill. Never had I seen such a picture of profound misery. The mud cabins were no better than stables, for the people shared them with their pigs and donkeys; a pungent smell of smoke filled the streets. The village numbered one hundred and seventy inhabitants, including women and children. They were barely covered

by their dirty rags, and lived on the produce of their fields in the valley below, visiting it every day to procure water. They were very shy, and at first hid themselves, but when Tan explained who I was and wherefore I came, they gained a little confidence, and three of them offered to show us what there was to be seen. The number of these wretched creatures had been sadly diminished by the war.

In the village on the plain every house was preparing supper, and the streets were full of smoke, owing to the Chinese habit of leading the chimney through the side wall instead of the roof.

Sosnowsky having returned, now gave orders to start, although it was late and the carriages had been delayed. The Chinese belonging to the next village showed rare foresight, and sent out ten men to meet us, carrying torches of dried grass, but as they had not been told we were going to spend the night there, they could only show us into a house full of smoke. The two little rooms were quite dark, and our baggage being still a long way off, we had to do without our bedding, candles, or tea, and to lie down as we were, without undressing.

June 4th. We got up rather late, and our baggage had not arrived. One hour, two hours went by, and still no carriages. We greatly longed for tea, but had none with us. At last we got some from the inhabitants and some brown sugar, which one of our guides brought us in the handkerchief he used to roll round his head.

After we had had our tea, I stuffed the birds Sosnowsky had shot the day before (*Ibidorhyncha Struthersii*, *Ardea*

cinerea, *Ibis Nippon*, *Sterna hirundo*, *Himantopus candidus*). Matoussowsky worked at his diary, and the chief went off again to shoot, but, anxious about the non-arrival of the carriages, and fearing some robbery or aggression, he retraced his steps with a Cossack and the interpreter. They soon met the caravan, and found that the delay was caused by all the carriages being overloaded. The mules could, in truth, hardly crawl along, and they did not all come in till six o'clock at night. The drivers now expected to rest their horses, and I was myself searching for a comfortable corner in the yard wherein to spend the night, when the interpreter came to say we were to start at once and that Sosnowsky would catch us up.

The next stage being thirty-five versts (more than twenty miles), I could hardly believe my ears till Andreïewsky repeated his orders three times, and the Chinese threw themselves at our feet, begging for mercy, if not for themselves at least for their poor beasts. We were greatly moved by their tears and entreaties, but had not sufficient authority to delay the start.' Seeing that their entreaties were of no avail, they explained that if they were forced to start immediately they would be still farther behind the next day, and that their mules would only fall by the wayside.

These arguments were sound, but the chief was absent, and where were we to find him? It would be a violation of discipline and a usurpation of the rights of others did we take upon ourselves to decide. We well knew what the result would be, but at length took the risk and remained where we were for the night.

June 5th. We again got among the hills. A peculiar clay soil, called *loess*, possessing peculiar properties of its own, now predominated. The fields were in ridges, containing whole villages of subterranean dwellings, sometimes in two storys, but always arranged so that the upper story alternated with the lower. This mode of dwelling in caverns was very singular and uncommon. On nearing a mountain, we noticed horizontal or slightly inclined parallel lines. These turned out to be artistically-constructed terraces covering the whole mountain, and strengthened by an embankment. One terrace succeeded another, and communicated by steps with those above and below it. We could see black holes in these perpendicular banks, looking in the distance like stoat-holes, but they proved to be the doors and windows of these subterranean dwellings. I was struck by the absence of human beings, and learnt that the enemy had not spared the inhabitants of these caves. Some of the habitations were being repaired as we passed by, and we were reminded of a swarm of ants reconstructing their ant-hills. Bricks were being made, new dens hollowed out, and the old mended up, pillars were in course of erection; and amidst all this naked children played about or stood watching us pass, drumming their little fingers on their rosy lips, and knowing neither sorrow for the past nor care for the future.

We seldom met anyone of much interest. I must, however, mention a rather pretty lady with bright black eyes and outrageously painted face. She was carried by four men, in a palanquin, and an individual, who was probably her



SUBTERRANEAN DWELLINGS BETWEEN TI-DAO-TCHOU AND LAN-TCHEOU.

husband, walked by her side. On seeing us, they all stopped and stared for a long time.

We were still at a distance of eight *li* from the town of Fou-Tzieng-Sieñ. About this period I had a narrow escape of putting an end to my journey and to my existence by very nearly falling into a deep ravine. I was uprooting a plant at the edge of a precipice, when I suddenly felt the earth give way under me. Happily my companions were able to seize me by the arm. "Mine hour is not yet come," thought I, greatly horrified by the hollow sound of the earth falling to the bottom of the ravine, as I myself had so nearly done. The soldiers were quite as alarmed as I was; they thought of it long after the accident, and ever after when I went to gather a plant two of the faithful creatures would accompany me, holding on to my arm or my clothes even when there was not the slightest danger.

The road became more and more frequented, and we constantly met pedestrians, beasts of burden, and horses, Along the road women were selling a sort of sour thick soup, which the drivers ate with wheaten rolls and seemed to appreciate, but I myself felt too uncertain of its cleanliness to taste it. From the top of a hill we saw a great plain surrounded on three sides by mountains covered with yews, long straight poplars, mulberrry-trees, thuyas, elms, and a considerable number of ruined villages. We soon reached the walls and towers of the town of Fou-Tzieng-Sieñ with its crowds of houses and rough, noisy people.

Triumphal arches, pretty towers, temples, houses; stuffs of various colours were hung about some dye-works as flags

would be on a great holiday in a European town. All was picturesque and attractive.

Fou-Tzieng-Sieñ, which had not been molested by the civil war, appeared one of the prettiest towns in China, and I should gladly have spent a day there, but Sosnowsky, who had already rested and breakfasted, was just starting as we arrived, and begged us not to delay, as we must travel another fifty-one *li* that day, so we had to obey.

We received the hospitality of the town in a house adorned with stuffs and lanterns; the rooms were richly decorated, all the furniture and the *kang* covered with red cloth embroidered with silk, and the walls decorated with pictures. Mandarins and soldiers in full uniform were stationed in the large clean courtyard. After a halt of barely half-an-hour we started off again. I met two Chinese ladies on horseback, very well dressed and covered with a thick black veil. The women of the poorer classes walked along the streets with their heads uncovered; there were however very few of these, and a crowd composed entirely of men accompanied me out of the town. In the neighbourhood of Fou-Tzieng-Sieñ there is a most interesting temple, Fou-Ye-Miao, with an enormous bronze statue of Buddha placed very high in a cleft on the mountain. Two hours would have sufficed to get there, but we had to content ourselves with looking at it through a telescope. In the plain the villages rapidly succeeded each other, and were mostly of recent date, so surrounded by fields and trees that the valley had all the appearance of a big garden. Among the numerous birds were pigeons, turtle-doves, phea-

sants, starlings, blue magpies, and peewits. To the north-east the hills were cultivated, but in the opposite direction they were of red sandstone, devoid of vegetation, and looking like round towers of gigantic dimensions. After walking over the dried-up bed of a canal with high embankments, we climbed a hill whence we perceived a tributary of the Yellow River, the silvery You-Fo. The recent rains had so increased its volume that it was impossible to cross it, and we were obliged to go round another way. The path zig-zagged and sometimes skirted a precipice, but these mountains were scarcely more than hills, and cultivated up to the top. The road was crowded with pedestrians, porters, women on horseback, caravans, and beasts of burden. I killed several partridges of a large species (*Caccabis magna*) first described by M. Prjewalsky.

Behind the hills the scene changed. At their base a vast tent of verdure spread out below the masses of red sandstone, farms lay in groups of three and four, and rice-fields hidden beneath sheets of water reflected the surroundings as in a mirror; half-naked villagers in straw hats worked together in the gardens; some dug pits round trees planted in large earthenware pots, while others drove a wheel along the fields, forming a rut to facilitate the drainage. This was the lower part of the village of Sañ-Schi-Li-Pow; the rest of it was situated at a certain distance up the mountain, and devoid of trees or verdure. Its sad-coloured huts had nothing in common with the lower half. Night had overtaken us, but the full moon lit up this beautiful silent valley, and my thoughts dwelt on the devastations of this recent and

barbarous war. I seemed to conjure up those ferocious faces, the terror-stricken inhabitants, disarmed in the midst of the conflagration, and seeking safety in flight, and the farewells of mothers and children, husbands and wives. Eyewitnesses relate that hunger forced these wretched creatures to eat the dead bodies!

These events were quite recent. How many inhabitants of this beautiful plain had obtained eternal rest, how many homesteads had been left desolate!

June 6th. The same road across the plain, with its villages temples, woods, and gardens. The crops splendid, especially the hemp. I entered the village of Lao-Myn, where a compact, noisy crowd had assembled near a temple in the public place, and a theatrical representation was going on. As I had to get through this crowd, my protectors made it their business to disperse it, and thumping some with their pigtails, spitting in the faces of others, or kicking their way along, they succeeded in forcing a passage so quickly that the Chinese, being occupied with the play, had no time to notice that a stranger was amongst them, and I had already left the square and reached a side street before my arrival was noised abroad. Every one then ran in pursuit of me, but the soldiers wheeled suddenly round, vigorously applied their clubs, and caused the tumultuous crowds to retire precipitately. In consequence of this sudden change of front many fell and were nearly crushed to death. Such scenes were most disagreeable to me. I always expected an explosion of anger or vengeance against myself as the indirect cause of these blows and accidents; but nothing

alarming happened, and the crowd, instead of resenting this treatment, went into fits of laughter, and with cries of encouragement urged on the military to strike out right and left.

Presently the soldiers asked leave to go and dine at an inn, and I took refuge in a shop from the sun's rays. Not one single native came to laugh at the stranger, although many faces expressed astonishment, fear, and curiosity. When the soldiers returned I went on, and met none but women in the streets. They looked thin and ill, and sat working on little benches at their doors, and I fancied that I now for the first time noticed them knitting socks, but I may have been mistaken, as generally the same linen stockings are worn in China, shaped to the foot and sewn together, as in the Russian hospitals. Other women sold food, and I noticed little tables with bread and money left quite unguarded in the owner's absence, theft being very rare.

I caught up and subsequently passed the baggage train. The horses and mules were perfectly exhausted, for they were dragging much too heavy loads and were allowed no rest. I then reached Nine-Youan-Siañ. Nothing remained of the suburbs of this town except an unshapely tower of solid masonry. My companions were in the midst of a conversation with the chief of the district, a middle-aged, bright-eyed man. He was a great talker, had no affectation, and did not in the least resemble the Chinese type. He was seated opposite our chief with the interpreters beside him, as well as another minor official, who scratched himself unmercifully throughout the interview. As these conversations had little interest for me, I went off to stuff

various birds that had been shot during the day (*Erythropus amurensis, Tartur viticolis, Sturnus dauricus, Milvus melanotis*). When the mandarin had departed, the cold remains of the dinner were brought to me, and after eating them I lay down to sleep for the third night without undressing.

June 7th. From early dawn every one was astir. Every now and then some ten Chinese at a time would come into the courtyard and have a good stare at us, and I was informed later on that the porter of the house had organised an exhibition, and for a certain sum permitted his countrymen to come into the courtyard in these small detachments. From the highest point of the road winding over the mountains we could see the plain watered by the You-Ho, and eight villages levelled to the ground; each had square earthen ramparts, like a citadel, with towers, not built on the ramparts, but projecting from them like brackets. These little forts had been built by those who had survived the civil war or by immigrants.

On reaching the plain we first crossed the You-Ho, and then the Nan-Ho, a rapid but not very deep river, as the water did not reach our horses' knees. The plain became unfrequented and quite solitary; the fields were replaced by vast expanses of short grass and small shrubs of *Iris tectorum*, the flexible and tender leaves of which are used by the Chinese to plait solid shoes with, such as are used by the poorer classes. The clay soil was broken by horizontal layers of shingle, at first sight easily mistaken for ancient walls. The habitations were built of unbaked brick or of clay. We again crossed the You-Ho. Its left bank followed

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the base of mountains with singularly distinct geological markings, the horizontal strata taking an outline of forty-five degrees. At night we halted in a village where a supper had been sent us from Houn-Tcheng-Fou, a town we were to reach the following day.

June 8th. We arrived amidst storm and rain at Houn-Tcheng-Fou, its enormous tower having been visible from a great distance. The brick wall of this town is of immense thickness; the projection at the gate supports a magnificent tower, and its exterior aspect led us to expect a beautiful city, populous and full of life, but we soon found out our mistake.

We entered upon an enormous silent square, a mass of ruins, here and there some miserable huts and isolated vestiges of walls, gates, and towers. The spectacle of this devastation, and the bad weather combined, was most depressing. The splendour and importance of this dead city could never be revived; and yet the patient tenacity of the Chinese is capable of attaining almost anything.

Our quarters were prepared in a public building where young people passed their diploma examinations. This edifice occupied a considerable area, and comprised numbers of apartments around the courtyard. The first courtyard was empty, and in it were assembled our baggage-carts. In the second, on each side of a tiled pathway, there were several rows of benches, covered like those to be seen in Lutheran churches. As I entered the first two soldiers took my horse by the bridle, made it climb the three steps leading into the second court, and go through the doors separat-

ing the second from the third. In the fourth they begged me to get down and see the three large airy rooms prepared for us.

During dinner Sosnowsky began discussing what presents we should make to the local authorities. Having nothing fit to give, he proposed sending them from three to five roubles apiece, and asked our opinion on the subject. We feared, however, that this would hurt their feelings, especially as the sum was so small. At last we agreed upon sending an offering of 60,000 sapeques for the poor of the town (£8 6s. 8d.), and Sosnowsky proposed giving the pagoda a share, as being equally a house of God!

June 9th. I hoped that we should have been allowed time to inform ourselves a little about what had taken place at Houn-Tcheng during the war, but we were obliged to start off again that very day. There was only time to load the horses and mules. As little as possible was paid for the latter; no easy matter in a district almost devoid of animals. Those who possessed any were greatly averse to lending them, fearing they should be over fatigued, or, worse still, lost. Bargaining and much impatience with the Chinese authorities was thus entailed. They were specified as "idlers of the first water, only fit for eating and opium-smoking."

At last we were ready to depart. The unfortunate town saw us off with all the honours; flags waved on the gates, military music resounded from the walls, and about thirty armed soldiers were drawn up to do honour to our exit.

A solitary road across the deserted plain, planted with

trees and shrubs, but covered with fallen trunks, from which sprouted fresh offshoots. For fourteen days we had walked through heaps of abandoned ruins. The few inhabitants seemed most wretched. With the exception of a few strips of land producing wheat and peas, sown by the soldiers of the local garrison, the fields remained uncultivated. A considerable number of these garrisons were stationed in small forts along the road, to preserve the country from a fresh Mussulman invasion. The commandants of the garrisons were forewarned of our arrival, and came forth with music and flags to meet us. A dinner was prepared for us towards the middle of the day's journey, and we made acquaintance with an officer of the name of Lin, who spoke with enthusiasm of Han-Keou, where he had formerly lived. He rejoiced in having known Europeans, and groaned over the dull, monotonous existence he now led, sighing at the small feet of the ladies. He expressed a hope that we should meet again some day at Han-Keou, which I heartily reciprocated, now that I knew the Chinese to be a gentle and hospitable people.

At nightfall we reached a fortified camp, where we were received with the same ceremony. Two generals, four officers, with soldiers and inhabitants, came with lanterns to meet and conduct us to the fortified camp on the mountain-side.

June 10th. Wonderful to relate, we were not forced to hurry off in the morning, and thus got through some work. At every moment soldiers came to look at us; they approached without ceremony, and although they kept quiet,

breathed in our ears in the most offensive manner, and incessantly scratched themselves.

Towards midday the order went forth for our start. We had the charming prospect of a stage of eighty *li*, and an additional fifteen if time permitted. A whole detachment of soldiers accompanied our chief. We stopped for the night in what had apparently been a stable. Thanks to Tan-Loe, I arranged a comfortable bed under a penthouse, by taking a door off its hinges and putting it across some benches. We then settled our mattresses upon it, and the few inhabitants of the village were lost in admiration of our ingenuity. They stopped to talk and examine our blankets, sheets, and pillows, even after we had got into our impromptu beds, and carefully scrutinised our boots, awarding great praise to everything. They only took themselves off when I finally put out the candle and wished them good-night as a gentle hint that it was time to go.

June 11th. We rose with the lark, hastily drank a cup of tea, and followed our chief, who, in his usual fashion, had started at a fast trot, forcing the unfortunate soldiers to run if they would keep pace with him. The heat was overpowering, and to protect themselves from the sun our soldiers made themselves garlands of yew. The road was quite unfrequented; we did not even see any ruins, and probably the country was quite as thinly populated before the war.

Amongst the birds I observed the *Fregilus graculus*, with a red beak like a pheasant's.

The heat had brought on a storm; but we reached an

isolated house just in time to take shelter. It was the picture of misery: the animals and their masters all lived together; sucking-pigs and hens wandered unheeded about the rooms. The master of the house was none the less delighted to see us. He had heard that I was a doctor, and his wife was just then suffering from her eyes, the cause being the smoke, which as usual filled the house. As this disease is common all over China (chronic blephanitis) I had all the necessary remedies at hand. Their child was just recovering from small-pox. The shower over, we started for the town of Ti-Dao-Tchoou, the centre of the Mussulman insurrection during the war. We were shown the wall of their fortified camp, and beside it the Mussulman cemetery, with tombs like pyramids or little chapels. The wall was well preserved, but had not availed to protect the town, now in ruins, although in course of reconstruction. A temple gave us shelter.

June 12th. To-day's stage was not as dreary as that of yesterday; around us were beautiful meadows, wheat and barley-fields and rebuilt villages. The inhabitants seemed less sickly and wretched than those we had come across during the last few days, although many were marked with small-pox, principally the women. We were very tired, especially the soldiers of our escort, after a whole day's march. They were small and thin, and spoke a dialect of their own it was impossible to understand, whereas I was now able as a rule to carry on conversation with the other Chinese. Night had overtaken us and we had lost our way, but a Chinaman kindly put us on the right road again.

At last we reached a camp where the night was to be spent. My colleagues were there already, and I went to find Matoussowsky, who was installed in the little room we were to share together. It was a regular passage; the soldiers did not scruple to use it as such. In the neighbouring room they smoked opium and shouted at the pitch of their voices, treating us with no sort of deference, as they doubtless imagined we were the servants of the great "lords" who were much more advantageously housed.

We found our chief in a fury, and heard that the Governor-General of Lan-Tcheou had sent us two mandarins. "They actually did not come to meet me," said he, "when I entered the camp, and one of them, who had only a copper button on his hat, and was therefore a subaltern, was most haughty and arrogant. He spoke loud, boasted of his relationship to the Governor-General, smoked his pipe, and took the liberty of addressing me as 'thou.' This copper button came here into my room," related our chief, "with another man, and pointing at me with his finger asked if I were 'Sosnowsky?' He then without further invitation took the principal seat and opened the conversation. He informed me that the Governor-General had charged him to let me know that we should all be housed by the Government at Lan-Tcheou, and that he was to ask whether we preferred this to an hotel. I replied that I left it entirely in the hands of the Governor, and he in the rudest way replied, 'Say where thou wilt lodge.' I again repeated that it was as the Governor-General should decide, but he only reiterated his question."

The conduct of this subaltern did indeed seem odd, as did his questions, after all the ceremony we were usually treated to. It was an enigma, and we asked permission from the chief to make acquaintance with these mandarins. He assented, and told the interpreter to say that as the Governor had sent them to meet us, they might possibly be interested in seeing his colleagues and might as well pay them a visit. The conversation centred during the whole of supper upon the curious conduct of the "copper button," and we afterwards returned to our own quarters to await the mandarins' visit. Being uncertain whether they would come or not, we undressed and went to bed. A quarter of an hour after, a soldier came with their cards and asked if we could receive the mandarins. We had no wish to get up and dress again, so made an apology and deferred the visit till the next day. We might just as well have received them and had a little talk, for we never closed our eyes all night owing to the going and coming of the soldiers, who had no consideration for those they merely imagined to be their fellow-soldiers.

June 13th. We left the camp hastily, and had no time to make acquaintance with the "copper button." A dreary road across a hilly country, inhabited by a sparse and poverty-stricken population. We again saw two cages with criminals' heads in them. On descending the hills the scene suddenly changed, and we came on the beautiful vegetation of the valley of the Yellow River. The now more numerous population mostly inhabited caves dug where the soil was perpendicular, either down in the ravines or at a certain

height up the hills. It was quite a subterranean world, living its own life in families or societies.

June 14th. To-day we were due at Lan-Tcheou-Fou, a large and handsome city, capital of the province of Kañ-Sou. A grey sky and fine rain were no inducement to start early, especially as the distance from Lan-Tcheou was not great. However, the chief seemed almost in a greater hurry than usual, and departed the moment he had swallowed his breakfast. I staid behind with Matoussowsky to complete our various occupations, and we only started at two in the afternoon.

We found time to visit several of the subterranean dwellings abounding on every side, and got some idea of the occupants' mode of life. We first passed into a small court surrounded by a clay wall where hay and wood was stored, and where domestic animals were also housed. Some of these courts were planted with trees; tables, benches, stoves, and mangers were hollowed out in the soil. The dwelling had one large hole which represented the door, another small hole acted as a window, and others still smaller served the purpose of chimneys. A fairly well-lit room led into a second. If the rooms followed the external line of the hill they were fairly light, but if they went into the interior they were only lit by the door. They were unfurnished, with the exception of a few cooking or household utensils. The *kang* and the table were cut out of the soil, the latter invariably near the window to catch all the light. Another characteristic of these dwellings was the stove, likewise formed in the soil. Sometimes they had cupboards and

shelves in the walls, and one house had even a manger for a donkey. In others pits were hollowed out for the calves, pigs, and hens; but the more commodious had separate arrangements for their animals, and generally a separate entrance. When this was not the case the animals went through the rooms inhabited by their masters. Some dwellings were excavated two or three yards above the level of the soil, and had a staircase leading up to a landing sheltered by a porch. The steps were paved to prevent their wearing away. Thus it may be seen that these habitations required no material, unless it were the wood for a door and the framework for a window. They were cool in summer and warm in winter, and I noticed no signs of damp. The inhabitants seemed to enjoy good health, and the air was purer than in most of their houses, usually darkened as these are by thick smoke. Without question experience has proved the superiority of these abodes, for certain travellers assert that thousands of men inhabit them, principally in the plains of the Yellow River. The population of this part of the country had however been exterminated to an alarming degree. I saw whole villages of these dwellings absolutely deserted. The road to Lan-Tcheou went through a ravine between two rows of mountains, and had all the appearance of having been artificially cut out. It is a peculiarity of the soil called *loess* that it cuts in a vertical direction without any difficulty, but offers the greatest resistance to being cut horizontally, and owing to this fact we constantly came across natural arches and columns. Aqueducts for the irrigation of the fields above,

spanned the ravines so far over our heads that we could barely see them from the bottom of the ravines.

The country gradually resumed its frequented aspect; villages, pedestrians, carriages, caravans succeeded each other. I noticed mules carrying long thick beams in a very original way: across the little saddle a double rope with two knots was introduced on each side, and the beams were passed through the knots. The mule was thus as it were between two shafts, and carried its weight quite easily. The ravine became wider and wider, and the roofs of suburban temples peeped out here and there on the slopes of the mountains.

Amongst the thick foliage of the gardens, we now reached the wall of Lan-Tcheou, against the mountain on one side, and on the other lost in the ravine.

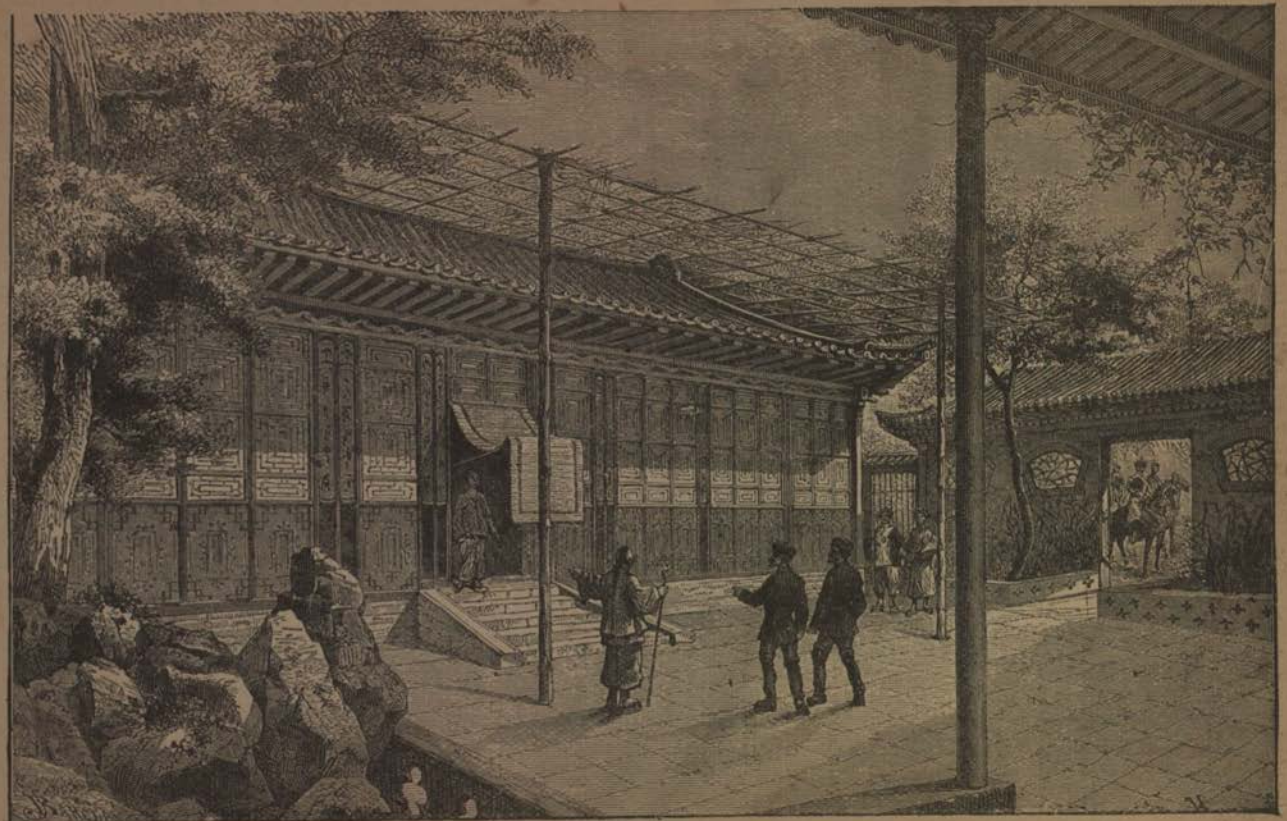
Whilst Matoussowsky took plans, I entered a street in the suburbs, and at once heard cries of "*Yan-jen! yan-jen!*" which brought the whole population running out of their shops to see me. My companion soon rejoined me with his suite, and we went on through picturesque and animated streets, especially grateful to the eye after the ruins we had of late been accustomed to. Once more we were among beautiful temples with their artistically worked cornices, triumphal arches, lattices, &c. I was quite rejoiced to be again amidst the noisy crowd.

We got into the centre of the town, and on the wall saw five heads hanging in cages. They were insurgent Doungauns, whose recent execution testified to the severity of the Chinese law. No one seemed to pay any heed to them. We

created the utmost excitement as we went by. The inhabitants had evidently never seen any foreigners before. I watched the crowd with much interest, pushing, shoving, knocking each other down to get a glimpse of us. Once seen such sights can never be forgotten. My first impression of this rich and populous town was tolerably favourable, and reminded me of Pekin in its best quarters. A detachment of cavalry came to meet us, and wheeling to the left preceded us as guides to our alloted abode. We were still uncertain whether this was to be in a private house or in a public building ; but when we turned down a side street, the crowd did not venture to follow us, as we were to go to the residence of the Governor-General. On reaching a gateway, we got into a large clean courtyard. In a second court the soldiers took the bridles of our horses and led them to the door of a third, where we dismounted. A room divided by a partition was given to Matoussowsky and me, and a large hall was set apart as common sitting-room for the members of the expedition.

The furniture was of the simplest—rough wooden bedsteads, two old tables, two stools with cushions. The walls were black and the floors tiled ; the window filled in with paper I immediately tore down, and then looked out on a little yard where water was boiling on a stove, two elms and a high wall shutting out the view. One of the Cossacks came to tell us that the chief had most unwillingly been forced to go that very day to the Governor-General, who had insisted on seeing him at once.

This seemed strange, for knowing the Chinese customs, we



THE QUARTERS OF THE EXPEDITION AT LAN-TCHEOU

should have expected him to come and see us first, instead of requiring us to go to him before we had well dismounted.

The Cossack added, "It is true that the chief's uniform was quite ready to put on." But knowing the self-importance of our chief and his habit of keeping people waiting for him, even when a visitor had been announced, this fact as to the uniform was insignificant.

In an hour Sosnowsky returned; we had not seen him in such good humour for a long time. He confirmed the statement that the Governor had insisted on his going at once to him, and added "That he was awaiting us with impatience; that he was an excellent old man, very clever and well educated, and what was better still, a good man of business."

"He is not a man of many words," added the chief, "but goes straight to the point, and I thus have been able at once to settle matters. He is a first-rate old man; we ought to have more like him at the frontier. When I arrived we spoke of various things, and he then quite abruptly said, 'You are our neighbours and old friends; give us then proofs of your amity and supply us with bread for our army; for although we have plenty, it is impossible to convey it to this distance, whereas the transport would cost you almost nothing. As to the price, we are willing to pay you anything you like; we have the money, but money alone will not feed soldiers.'"

"'We are in a position to supply you with bread, but it will cost you a great deal. Will you take it for 30 roubles (£4 15s.) the tchetvert?" (a Russian measure equivalent to

about half a bushel). Upon which he replied that he would. So here was the affair concluded. I agreed to supply him with twenty-five thousand tchetverts at 30 roubles apiece; so you see what a good thing I have made of it.'"

Now I had never been able to understand commercial matters, and therefore never interfered with them, but this time I ventured to join in the conversation. "And are you not afraid," said I, "to undertake this? What will happen if you find no means of transport, or the corn to be too expensive?"

"It is precisely because bread is dear that I settled the price at 30 roubles. There is so much in our district of Semipalatinsk that we do not know how to get rid of it, and there is no lack of transport; I have only to send word to the Kirghiz and I shall have as many camels as I can use."

The chief got quite animated talking of the Kirghiz and Semipalatinsk, and told us what influence he possessed over the tribes of that district.

Matoussowsky interrupted him, however, saying, "I admit that an immense profit may be made out of this transaction; but on the whole, from a political point of view, it is not for us to supply them with bread. At present, thank God, our frontier is at peace, and the Chinese and Mussulmans have ceased to pillage and massacre each other. Furnish them with food, and they will bring their armies here; the war will recommence, and the Kashgar and Kouldja questions will be again revived. Refrain from bringing this about, both in the interests of humanity and our own. Mark my words, this bread will cause fresh bloodshed."

"What are you talking about?" replied Sosnowsky. "I am quite familiar with affairs on the frontier. Do I not command at Semipalatinsk? Allow me to know best about State interests. This very thing will promote commerce by this route. Once our caravans have gone over it, the road will be opened out."

"For bread, yes; and that only as long as there shall be a demand for it. But once their own corn is sown, they will not continue to take yours, especially at that price. If you think it over, you will see that it is not at all to our advantage. I quite agree that there will be profit, but the State interests do not consist in enriching two or three merchants. You will do well to abandon the transaction; to refuse it on some pretext or other, or only to promise on certain conditions."

Sosnowsky would not give in, and closed the discussion by saying that Matoussowsky had no experience in business, that he knew nothing of our political and commercial relations with China, and finally that they were quite beyond his comprehension. He then proceeded to read us letters received from Pekin, announcing the sad fate of Colonel Brown's English expedition, and the assassination of Consul Margery, whose head had been exhibited in a cage.

This news was by no means cheering, especially to our chief, who had the "moral responsibility of all the members of the expedition."

CHAPTER IV.

First Visit to Tzo-Tzoun-Tan—Yellow River and its Bridge — Water Elevator—Tzo and the Children—Official Dinner at Tzo's House—Punishment of a Soldier—Supper with the Governor-General—Review—Dead Body in the Street—Visit to the Prison—An ex-Governor in Chains—Instruments of Torture—Contract for Bread—Portrait of Tzo—His Presents, Last Visit, and Farewell Dinner—Departure.

June 15th. To-day we were presented to Tzo-Tzoun-Tan, one of the six officials of the highest rank in China. We were all in full uniform, even the Cossacks.

As the Governor-General inhabited the same house, we had only to go through a few courts to reach a clear space with a sort of stand in the middle, like those used for the band in garden concerts. This was, however, used for quite a different purpose, as it was here that Tzo presided over legal cases. Its only furniture was a table with a red cover, several chairs, and a casket, with the imperial seal placed on a red pedestal. Hence we were ushered by two mandarins through a door to the left into the reception-room. This room was long and narrow, and furnished with a few chairs, separated by little tables; the seat of honour was a *kang*, placed at the end of the room. Inscriptions and drawings of ancient monuments decorated the walls.

Tzo-Tzoun-Tan not only failed to come to meet us, as his colleague, Li-Da-Tchen, governor of the province of Hou-Pé

and Hou-Nan, had done, but he kept us a long time waiting for him. This was the more noticeable from the fact that our chief had called upon him as soon as he arrived the night before.

At length the mandarins posted at the door put themselves into respectful attitudes, and whispered that he was coming. Our chief had also posted us, according to our rank, in a line opposite the door, which shortly admitted the governor, followed by about twelve mandarins in uniforms, he himself only wearing the official hat.

He was small and stout, and could not be more than sixty. His countenance reminded me somewhat of that of Prince Bismarck, except that he was dark. He had barely three hairs in his beard, but his moustache was rather thicker. His movements were full of affectation, and perhaps intended to produce a strong impression. I fear that in this he did not succeed. He gave a kind of general and almost imperceptible salute on entering, and then stopped short, as if something had suddenly occurred to him, but he said nothing, advanced another step, and then stopped short to look at us. One of the mandarins gave him the list of visitors, which he took very deliberately and read at arm's-length, much as an old man would do. He pronounced our chief's name, and pointed to him as if to make certain that he knew him by sight; then he pronounced the next name, looking up at each person as he said it, and so on. He eyed us all, as if he had to make some selection from among us. Then he began trying to learn our names by heart, which was not easy, and he got very confused with *So*, *Pia*, *An*, &c. We were standing all this time, and when he had done examin-

ing me, I said to my colleagues, "Well, gentlemen, we may as well sit down, as there seems no intention of asking us to do so." Without understanding my words Tzo grasped their general meaning, moved away from the door, and begged us to pass on, following us slowly and stopping at each step to compare us one with the other.

How absurd we must have appeared in this comedy! Why this curious reception and behaviour? It is possible that he took us for persons of no note, compared to his high rank, for the Chinese, being very ignorant of strangers and their habits, can form no opinion as to the social status of those with whom they come in contact. It seemed to me that he was very much at a loss to know whether he should ask us all to sit down, or only ask Sosnowsky to do so. He continued scanning us silently and gravely, sometimes smiling with no apparent reason; and this scene, in which the sole actor was Tzo-Tzoun-Tan, lasted quite ten minutes.

To put an end to such a painful situation I took the initiative and sat down, begging my colleagues to do the same, that the General might see that we were not servants in the suite, but persons of a certain rank. This loosened his tongue, and he immediately begged us to be seated, and lastly sat down himself, and offered us tea. He opened the conversation by saying that he knew the dissimilarities between the Chinese and strangers, as shown, for instance, in our different ways of reading and writing; he seemed to wish to describe these by pointing along an imaginary book, and saying, "Tou-tou, tou-tou-tou! Tou-tou, tou-tou-tou!" He asked us if we knew Chinese, and on hearing that some

of us had learnt a little, he smiled, and good-naturedly put us through an examination. The visit was of considerable length, and we gathered that Tzo wished to make further acquaintance with us before letting us go. He examined our uniforms, taking great interest in the details, and asked Sosnowsky why I had large bullion on my epaulettes whilst he had none? Sosnowsky explained that it denoted a different branch of the service. And to think that I had always hitherto imagined that large bullion indicated a superior grade, and not a separate branch of the service!

Judging by precedent, we now expected Tzo to return our visit; but we waited in vain for any official visit. In the evening, however, after his walk, Tzo came to see us with his suite, but quite unceremoniously. This we considered a want of civility, but tried to overlook it on account of his age. He spent half an hour with us, and expressed great astonishment that we had neglected to see the town of Si-An-Fou, the ancient capital of China, so near our route, and so well worth a visit, both from a commercial and historical point of view.

The whole time he was with us his suite remained standing behind his chair, and appeared to listen attentively to everything he said. When he got up they gave him his gold-headed cane, and he took his leave, promising to come and spend the evening with us. Two mandarins of the suite supported him under the arms whilst he went down the staircase, tapping the stairs with his stick as he went along. Two soldiers awaited him below, with white silk lanterns ornamented with red letters describing his dignities.

We accompanied him to the outer door of the first court, where, after many civilities, we took final leave of him.

From the little we could understand of his conversation it was easy to remark that Tzo was a man of intelligence, and well educated for a Chinese. He must have been eloquent and persuasive, to judge by the play of his countenance and his gestures. There was, however, a difference of opinion among us about him; some maintained that he was thoroughly good-natured, and others that we must be careful not to offend him.

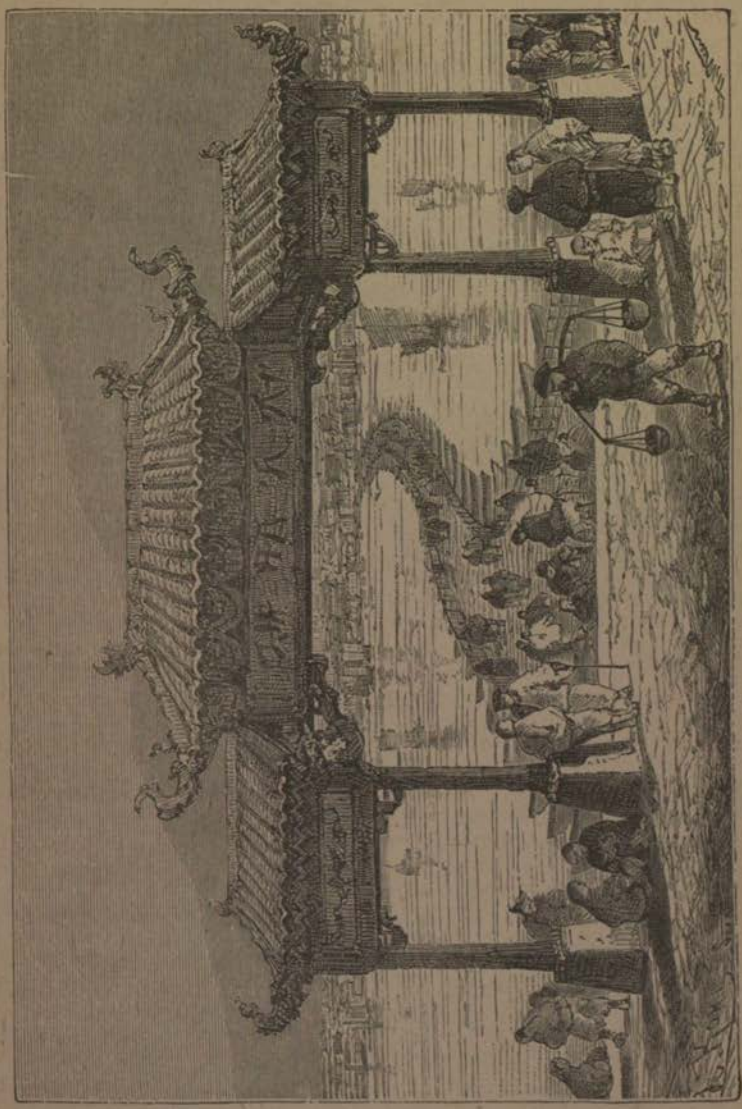
June 16th. The day was spent in visits to the local authorities, without my being able to find out exactly who these personages were. We started off on horseback through the streets of Lan-Tcheou, to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants, who could contemplate us to their hearts' content. The Chinese run, jumped, laughed, and screamed like maniacs; the crush and the dust were indescribable. Of all the six mandarins we called upon, only one received us. The servants of all the other *ya-min* prostrated themselves before us with many genuflections, explaining either that their "great lord" was ill or absent. I have no idea how much faith was to be placed in these statements; it certainly was not likely that they were all absent or ill on the same day, as they had been forewarned of our visit. We had never hitherto been received in this unpleasant and incomprehensible manner.

The days slipped by without any cares. Our apartments were delightfully clean. Dinner and supper were punctually served; we had a large staff at our disposal, and plenty of

leisure. Lan-Tcheou being a big town, it was somewhat difficult to find the way about. I had noted a pagoda situated on a hill, whence a good bird's-eye view could be obtained. So, accompanied by Tan-Loe and a soldier as guide, I rode towards the northern gate facing a bridge formed by twenty-four boats, and thrown across the Yellow River. Lan-Tcheou is situated on the right bank of the Houang-Ho, renowned for its inundations, and at this spot about a mile and a quarter wide. The distance from Lan-Tcheou to its mouth is 3,106 miles. Its waters are not yellow, as its name might lead one to suppose, but very muddy and clay-coloured, through the quantity of earth it carries away. It is easy to see the force of the stream by looking at the bridge, as it is not straight, but forms a zig-zag in the shape of the letter S. The boats on which it is constructed, not being held in their place by anchors, are pushed on by the force of the stream. These boats are fastened together by two strong chains and fourteen ropes, each about a quarter of a yard in thickness, mostly made from the fibres of the *Chamærops* palm. The extremities of the chains and cables are fastened on either bank to slanting stone pillars deeply embedded in the earth.

I cannot imagine why the Chinese do not use anchors to fix their bridges. Owing to the continuous movement of the pontoons, no solid resting-place can be obtained, and the Lan-Tcheou Bridge is simply horrible. Although by no means nervous, I did not like crossing it at all. Beams and planks were thrown from one boat to the other, and as we crossed them they went up and down like the notes of a

pianoforte. I had to watch that my horse did not put its leg into a hole at every step. A continual swaying back-

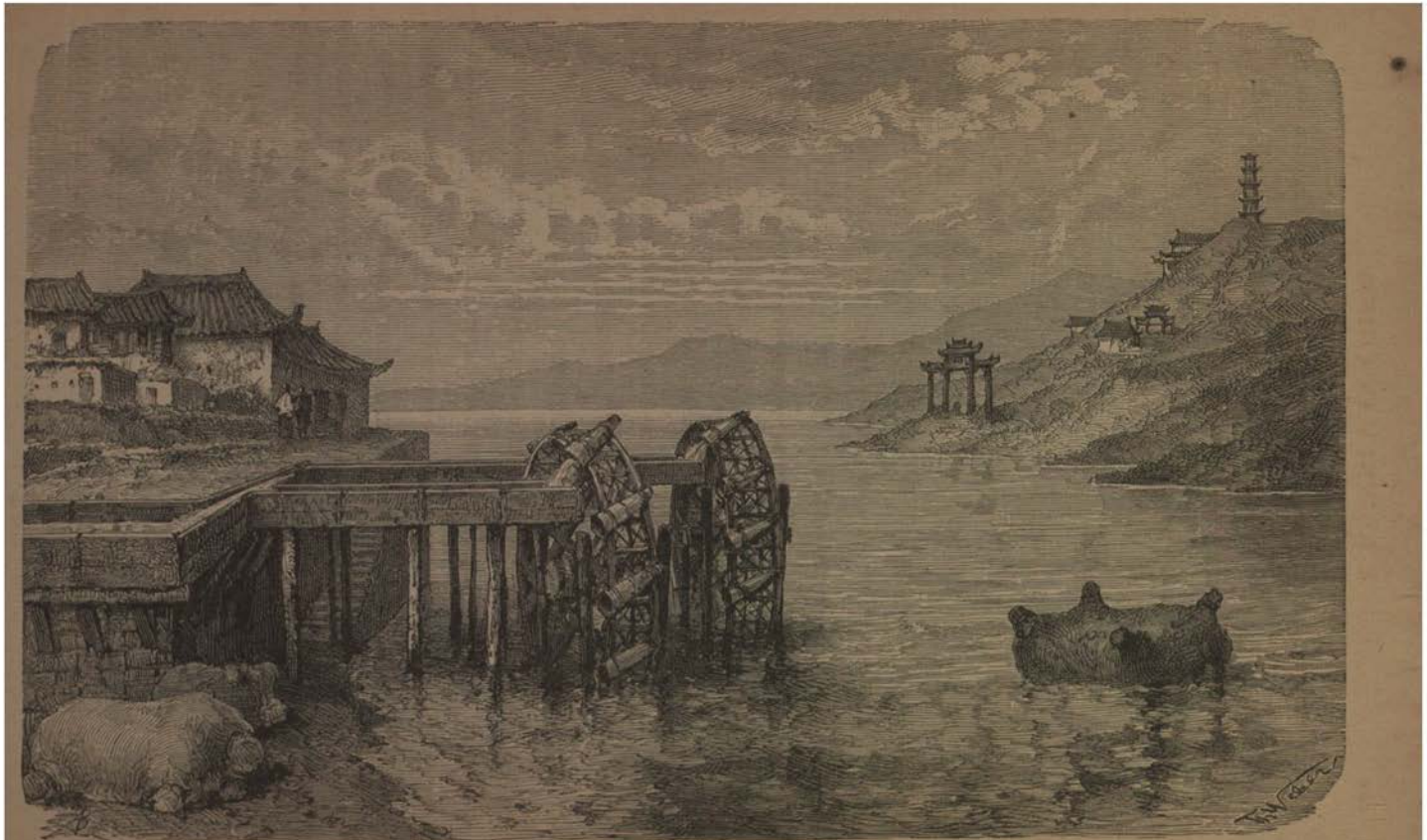


BRIDGE ON THE YELLOW RIVER AT LAN-TCHEOU.

wards and forwards was produced as much by the load of men, horses, and carriages as by the stream. The Chinese

managed very well, but I momentarily expected a bath in the Houang-Ho. An English company had offered to build a stone bridge, but as fourteen or sixteen million roubles was the price asked, the tender was not accepted by the Chinese Government.

We began climbing the tortuous and steep paths up the left bank, and passed one temple after another. Several were scattered about on the hillside without any regular plan. A violent gale and considerable fatigue prevented my reaching the pagoda on the summit, but from the spot I did reach I had a good view of the winding river, the valley, and surrounding mountains, several luxuriantly planted islands, the wall dividing the town into two parts, arches and temples with their green, yellow, or blue roofs, and a mass of houses, temple gardens, and public edifices. The country around had been devastated by the enemy, but the whole formed an attractive and interesting picture. After taking a sketch of the general effect, I returned across the bridge, and was going along the wall to the water elevator when my horse shied at a most curious object. It was a sort of bladder made of the entire skin of an ox, filled to its utmost capacity with air, and used for navigating purposes, especially for the transport of merchandise. These skins are fastened together so as to form a raft; their principal advantage consists in their great power of resistance, produced by the elasticity of the skin. To my great regret, I could not get near enough to see the manner of loading these rafts. The elevator was equally singular, and consisted of an enormous wheel, which, as it plunged under the



MACHINE TO RAISE WATER AT LAN-TCHEOU.

water, was turned round by the strength of the current. It was thus turned night and day, like a real *perpetuum mobile*, and requiring no one to work it. Twelve pails fastened to its outer circumference filled with water each time they dipped into the river, and on reaching the opposite extremity emptied their contents into a receptacle communicating with a pipe going through the wall of the town, and leading the water into numerous cisterns. The inconvenience of this system was only felt when the water was at a low ebb; the wheel could then no longer act, and the town was deprived of water. On these occasions men carried the water up to the receptacles—an immense undertaking, only possible in China, where labour is so cheap. Some years ago a steam elevator had been erected by strangers, but was no longer in working order; the machinery had gone out of repair, and no one knew how to put it right again.

One of the most beautiful fountains in the town happened to be in a court of the Governor-General's residence. Every one had a right to draw water from it, and from morning till night porters went perpetually backwards and forwards with barrels and tubs on little carriages drawn by themselves or by horses. A gallery surrounded the fountain on three sides, and several chairs were placed in it. A ceremony took place daily in this gallery, and I now came in for seeing it. On my return I happened to meet the General Tzo returning from his habitual walk with his suite. I bowed politely, but kept my distance and tried to obliterate myself. The general detained me, however, saying, "Houa-lé?"

(Have you been drawing?), and seeing my sketch-book, asked to look through it. He recognised the subject, praised the drawing, and asked me to accompany him to the fountain. "Everything interests you; you want to see everything," he said. "You shall make a drawing of the fountain." And we went off arm-in-arm. When we reached the gallery we both sat down, his attendants standing behind him. One of the mandarins placed a large basket of rolls before the General, and another, turning to a group of little boys and girls, bade them come forward. Placing themselves in a row, without any pushing or quarelling, they all advanced slowly towards the table. "Come forward," said Tzo with a kindly smile. The children advanced, and, after a deep *ko-toou* (bow) to the General, each received a roll from his hands. They then made a less profound bow (the *tzo-i*), and, passing to the left gallery, went off to their homes. Some of the small creatures were quite naked, and were brought by their sisters and brothers. They were so young that they had no idea of what a grand personage they were before, and presented themselves without doing reverence to the General. "Ko-toou! Ko-toou!" said Tzo laughingly, and the poor children, joining their little hands together, bowed so profoundly that they could not get up again. This scene pleased me as a trait of national life. There was something simple and old-fashioned in it. We Europeans have lost these good old customs. In China the barrier disappears which separates the high dignitaries from the poor.

I had intended to go next day to a temple in the town,

and obtain a bird's-eye view of it all, so as to decide what views I should take; but an official invitation to breakfast with the General obliged me to defer this to another occasion.

The first thing in the morning we each received a separate invitation, in a red envelope gummed down with a band of red paper, on which was inscribed our address. The invitation was written on a sheet of red paper folded three times, and the aide-de-camp Schi explained that it was to say that "Tzo-Tzoun-Tan invited us to breakfast on a certain day and at a certain hour." The invitation was for ten o'clock, and we had to don our uniforms and go off as fast as possible. This time Tzo came to meet us at the door of the tribunal already described. He and all his suite were in uniform. He had, therefore, begun to understand that an official reception would not compromise his dignity. We had to go across another court and through three doors before reaching the dining-room, where the table was laid, and where four servants awaited us dressed in pale yellow silk and their best hats.

The small dining-room was further divided in two by a sort of arch. In each division there were niches with windows, and a *kang* covered with books and papers. Near the door I saw a quantity of sticks, which Tzo had a fancy for collecting, and used in his walks; and on a little table the celebrated present offered by our chief. Without having seen it we had heard of it from one of the Cossacks, who valued it at 200 roubles. It was a landscape under a glass shade, of cardboard mountains covered with sand and

pebbles, and made most skilfully; moss represented trees; there was a windmill with sails made to turn round; below the house was a blue paper river with completely rigged boats, which could also move. At the bottom of this pasteboard picture was a musical-box, and the whole might have been about three-quarters of a yard long. He at once pointed it out to Sosnowsky when we entered the room, to show him that he had given it the most conspicuous place, and again thanking him most graciously. It was quite evident that this present, although so common to European eyes, gave him great pleasure. I had also noticed a yellow chest, with a dragon drawn on it, placed on a shelf nearly as high as the ceiling. The General explained that it contained a dress the Emperor had worn and given him as a signal mark of his favour.

The black lacquer table, without cloth or napkins, had only plates and little dishes on it, containing the habitual Chinese *entrées*, dainties, fresh fruit cut in slices, dried fruit, sugar comfits like those made at Kieff, and jellies; and on a side table, according to Chinese custom, game and salt fish; the whole artistically piled up on little plates. Each cover consisted of two saucers and two little cups, a two-pronged silver fork, and ivory chopsticks. Six stools covered with blue stuff and red cushions were arranged round the table.

Tzo first began with the ceremony usually preceding the repast. At a given signal a servant approached the General, carrying a tray with little cups and a teapot full of wine. Tzo took a cup, which the servant filled, and turning towards us pronounced the name of our chief. An aide-de-camp

showed Sosnowsky his place, and whispered to him not to take his seat before Tzo invited everyone to do so. Tzo solemnly lifted the cup above his head, holding it in both hands, and slowly approaching the place, put it down on the table. He then raised each article belonging to the cover over his head in the same way, moved the stools, and made pretence of dusting them himself. Again lifting his hands over his head, he bowed profoundly to Sosnowsky, and led him to the place he was to sit in, where Sosnowsky remained standing.

He gravely went through the same ceremony with us all, and when we were all placed went to his own stool, and invited us to be seated. After a courteous struggle Tzo remained victor, and seated himself last, doubtless to show us how polite and amiable he could be. A servant tied a napkin round his neck, but a very coarse one—a regular kitchen cloth, in blue and white squares. At the same time he put a fourfold square of white linen on the table and an ivory toothpick. Another servant put little square papers, folded like napkins, in front of each of us, meant to serve as such. Tzo took his cup of wine, rose, greeted us all, and invited us to drink. We did the same, and he then proceeded to help us with his chopsticks to a little piece of fruit each, some bonbons, game, and salt fish, and then begged us to help ourselves.

After this *hors-d'œuvre*, birds'-nest soup was brought, and a whole series of dishes I cannot remember. There were about fifty : roast meat, boiled and stewed meat, sauces, and mixtures of all sorts, and generally delicious. Our host



CEREMONY PRECEDING A REPAST WITH GOVERNOR TZO.

helped us first to a small portion of each dish, begging us to help ourselves if we wanted more. The dishes were left on the table as they were brought up, till there was no more room, and then they were removed to make way for others. The little wine-cups were always replenished. Seeing that we did not drink a great deal, the General asked us if we would not like some foreign wine. We told him that we preferred the wine of the country, and begged him to keep the European for his friends. He, however, asserted that he always drank it, and that he received quantities of it, and then gave his servants orders to bring some. The latter shortly returned with a tray, and on it a European case mounted in gilt bronze, containing two crystal bottles and six glasses. "*Lin-ven*," said the General, not being able to pronounce *Rheinwein*. He drank it himself with evident enjoyment, and seemed pleased to show us that he had European wine and glasses. He apologised for having no champagne at the time—*chan-pan-tzu* (*tzu* means wine), and added, "that Europeans seemed to like it very much."

The dinner was somewhat prolonged, and Tzo still went on talking. I found it difficult to remember all that passed in conversation through interpreters, but I must try and give the General's opinion upon men's dispositions belonging to various nations.

"The men belonging to great nations have an upright disposition," said he, "but those born in small countries are of crooked minds," and to demonstrate his meaning he stretched out or doubled up his little finger. He further questioned us on some European powers, besides Russia,

which he knew by name: In-tchi-li (England), Fa-lian-si (France), I-ta-li (Italy), Pou-lius (Prussia), and Toul-si (Turkey). He had a vague idea of international politics, and questioned us on the relations existing between European nations, their respective strength, and their alliances. He was delighted to hear that England was always hostile to Russia, ever seeking to do us harm, and to encourage our enemies. It was just what he had thought himself. He could come to no other conclusion, and to demonstrate the crooked disposition of the English he bent his fingers quite double.

Finally he tried to make a comparison between China and Russsia, and asked us who would remain victorious in the event of a war between the two nations. We scouted the idea of war being possible between us, and protested that we ought to remain friends.

"Evidently that is my opinion," replied Tzo, "but I should nevertheless like to hear your opinion, as you have seen our army. If we were equally matched, who would come off victorious?"

We replied evasively, that probably it would be a drawn battle, and that although the Chinese army was more numerous, the Russian was stronger and better armed, but that both nations were equally brave. Tzo was not satisfied with this answer, and begged us to give our candid opinion, unrestrained by any fear of hurting his susceptibilities.

Thus pressed, Sosnowsky replied "That in case of war, Russia would prevail." He addressed the same question to Matoussowsky, and to each of us in succession, and invariably

received the answer "That the Russians would get the best of it."

The old man did not expect this answer, and it perplexed him sadly. In the simplicity of his heart he thought China was quite in a position to make head against Russia, and even to conquer her. I was really sorry for him; it seemed as if he must have had some cherished design against us.

After the dinner, which lasted six hours, tea was served "to make the food go down," and the worthy General then took a fit of the hiccoughs, which might have been heard in the court outside. He was altogether less restrained in his manners than any general we had hitherto come across.

According to custom, we took leave of him the moment we left the table, begging him not to take the trouble to accompany us; but to this he would not consent, and went out to the court with us, stopping to talk at every step. He spoke of a Frenchman who, after serving in the Chinese army, returned to Paris, and sent him a remembrance, which he now sent for. It was a magnificent gold chronometer from the Exhibition of 1872 (?), which fact was duly inscribed in the case, and outside there was a mandarin's hat with the red button and peacock's feather in enamel. The cunning old man, pretending not to know its value, made each of us appraise it, and after we had duly admired it, told us that it had cost nearly one thousand roubles, and then began laughing to himself with no apparent reason. Then the conversation turned on Tzo, with whom Sosnowsky was delighted.

When I used to go into the town to draw, accompanied by

four soldiers, a small boy of twelve years old, son of one of the mandarin's belonging to Tzo's suite, would often join me. He stammered, and was very mischievous, and his bad disposition quite disgusted me; he profited by his father's position to do evil with impunity. Sometimes he came to see us, but dared not be rude to us; towards the soldiers and the common people he was a very tyrant. In the streets he would order the soldiers to strike people without the slightest reason, and seemed quite annoyed if their clubs were inactive for a single instant. Although the surrounding crowd might be perfectly quiet whilst I drew, he would pick a quarrel on the first opportunity, cry with rage if he encountered opposition, and order the soldiers to strike the unlucky offender, deriving intense amusement from his sufferings.

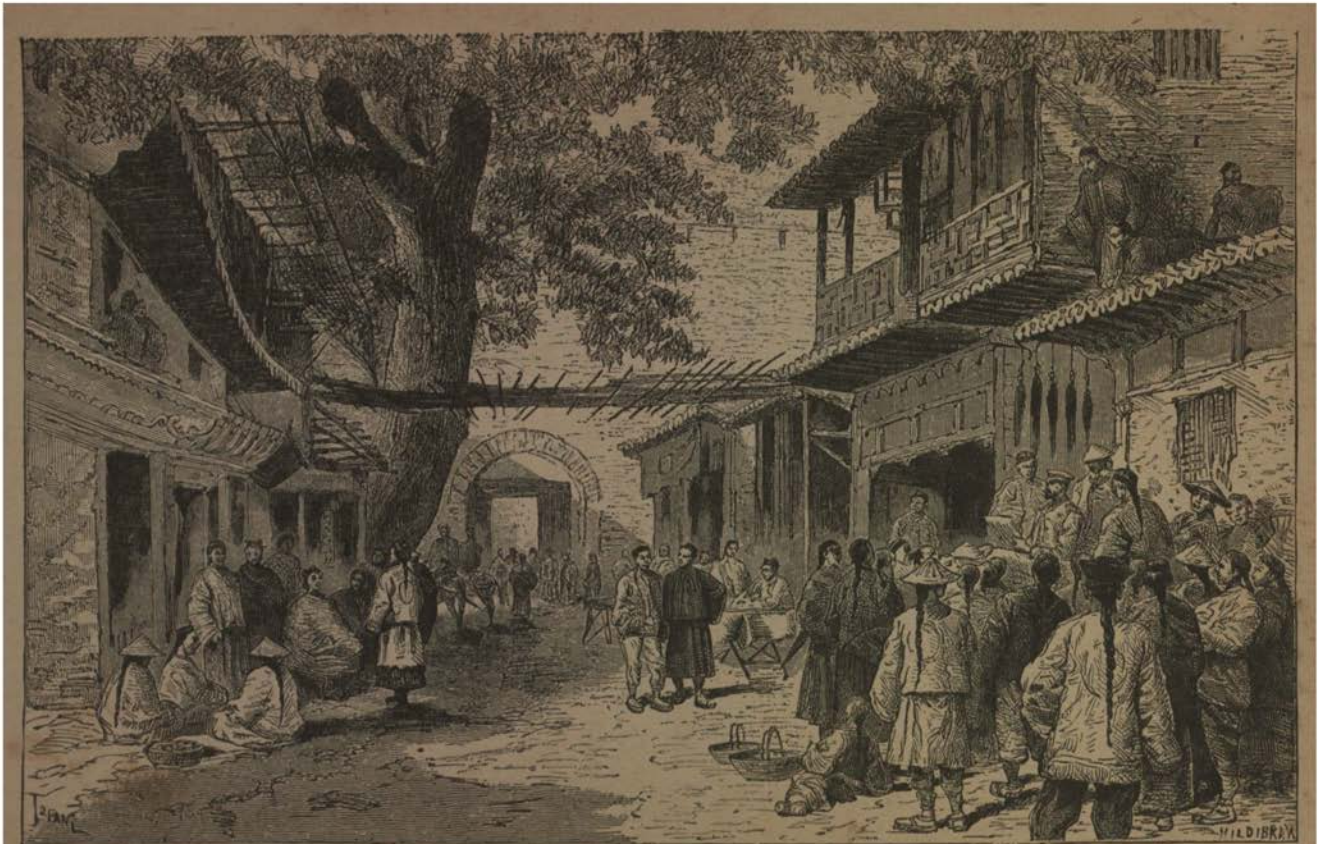
His father, being an excellent man, was doubtless quite unaware of his son's conduct. The servants spoilt him, as it was to their interest to please him.

One day hearing unusual cries and a strange recitative accompaniment, I rushed out of my room, and found a poor soldier being punished, whilst this little wretch was looking on quite pleased. The soldier, lying with his face to the earth, was held down by two fellow-soldiers seated on his feet and his shoulders, and a third struck him with a bamboo cane, counting the blows, and crying, "I, liañ, sañ, sy, ou, liu, tzi, pa, tziu schi, schi-i, schi-err, schi-sañ," and so on; that is, one, two, three, four, five, six, &c. The commandant was present at the execution of the sentence. The stick was not very thick or the blows very hard, but by

degrees the blood began to come; the small boy jumped about with merriment, and I could have wished him to have a taste of the bamboo. The stripes ceased. A hundred had just been counted for the third time. The commandant ordered them to continue, "*Tzaï-da*" (strike again). I approached the chief to beg pardon for the wretched creature, and my prayer was granted. "*Bou-yao-ta*" (cease striking), said he. I thanked him, and went away, but not without casting a glance at the little scamp, who looked angrily at me for having interrupted his diversion.

Most of the inhabitants of Lan-Tcheou knew me already, and I was quite pleased to be always surrounded whilst I sketched. One climbed a tree to obtain a better sight of what I was about; another lay flat on the roof, and watched my work from this altitude. No one ever did anything unpleasant to me; even the children liked playing with me, and only once did a little monkey call out, "Foreign devil!"

I often found on my return that Tzo-Tzoun-Tan had come quite unceremoniously to have supper and a talk with us. On these occasions silver candlesticks of European manufacture were brought, and wax candles. This heralded his visit. One evening I got in late and found everyone at table. Tzo asked me to show him what I had drawn during the day, and praised it, although he had not much idea of the art of drawing, whereas the suite standing behind his chair gazed eagerly at it, and although they did not dare to speak in his presence, they raised their fingers to me and gave me all sorts of approving nods. Tzo questioned us minutely



THE AUTHOR SKETCHING AT LAN-TCHEOU.

that evening about the Emperor of Russia, his appearance, figure, manner of life, and whether he showed himself to the people, and was much surprised to hear that he walked about on foot. He was most anxious to know the habits of our officials, and asked if they ever transgressed the law. Sosnowsky announced that this was of rare occurrence, as the newspapers denounced any scandal, and he recommended publicity as the best mode of keeping officials in check. Tzo was also interested in military art, philosophy, and the Russian manner of life. He probably wished to show how much he knew of strange countries, but was in fact ignorant of all these subjects, and this after all was scarcely astonishing.

Our chief, however, surprised us by his answers to the General's questions. For instance, Tzo asked how many years the Russians reckoned the world to have existed. Sosnowsky replied, "Seven thousand three hundred." The General smiled and turning to his mandarins made a remark we did not catch, but they smiled too, and he then said aloud, "Our empire is of older date."

Tzo then proceeded to other questions. "Is horseflesh eaten in Russia?"

"Very little."

"And does cannibalism exist in Russia?"

"Yes, it exists, but in very few places," said Sosnowsky.

This astonished us a good deal, and we thought it was said in joke. But the interpreter duly translated his words.

"Why make him believe what is not the case, and give him a bad impression of our country? Where do they eat

men in Russia?" Matoussowsky and I exclaimed with one voice.

"What!" said the chief, "have you never heard of the Samoyedes?* Don't you know about them? You had better rub up your geography."

"Forgive me, Samoyede is not a Russian word——"

"What nonsense you are talking!"

"And therefore why mislead a Chinese mandarin who—"

"Pray allow me to proceed; you have a mania for contradiction just for its own sake," and turning to the interpreter he ordered him to go on, or we should never get any further.

Ever after when I met Tzo-Tzoun-Tan or one of the mandarins of his suite, I always thought that these people must take me for an inhabitant of one of those rare countries where human flesh is eaten, and that probably it was entirely out of politeness that they did not ask me what the taste of *jeñ-de-joou* was like. I would have given anything to know what Tzo thought of us since the evening of the 20th of June.

The days passed on, and there was no question of our leaving. Our chief was bored to death, and yet he first put off our start three days, then two days, and again four days. We had seen everything there was to be seen: a gun-factory, a foundry for cannons worked by steam, and without a single foreigner in the establishment. We had also seen the big army manœuvres.

On the 21st of June, long before sunrise, we were awoke

* *Samoyedes* is derived from the words *sam*, one's self, and *yed*, eater. The tribe lives in the north of Siberia, and has never practised cannibalism.

by drums and trumpets, and at first I thought the alarm was being sounded for a sortie on the enemy who must have come during the night to besiege the town. The troops went to the scene of action the first thing in the morning. We ourselves hastened to get ready, although Sosnowsky judged it to be more polite to delay our start till Tzo had gone on.

Without deciding this knotty question, I greatly regretted that we could not be on the field to see the arrival of the General. However, it was decided that we should only set out when salutes should announce that Tzo had arrived on the scene. We awaited these salutes in vain, and the mandarins were meanwhile running in at every moment to find out whether we had started.

At last the guns were fired; Tzo had started, and the chief informed us that in a quarter of an hour we should follow him. We had hardly got out before Sosnowsky started off full gallop, followed by a Cossack; the rest of us proceeded at an even trot till we reached the field, distant three versts (two miles) from the town.

To the right, soldiers were massed on a plain bounded by mountains on the one side, and on the other by the wall of the town, supporting a high bastion.

To the left, and facing the field, was a stand in three divisions towards which we directed our steps.

The centre was set apart for great dignitaries, and here we imagined that we should have seats. I expected to see Sosnowsky already installed with Tzo, but to my great surprise I only beheld some unknown mandarins, who seemed inclined to take no notice of us. In vain we searched about

for Sosnowsky and Tzo; an aide-de-camp came, and taking us by the arm, led us to the terrace. He showed us to our places with a confused and embarrassed look, and there, seated at a table, we found Sosnowsky, who beckoned us forward.

The aide-de-camp timidly asked us to seat ourselves, but appeared to expect a refusal.

"What! here among the musicians?" said I; "I will not remain here! Who do they take us for? It is not as if we were indoors. We are in the presence of the army and the crowd."

Matoussowsky backed me up, and Sosnowsky quite agreed with us, so I continued in the same strain, and advised that we should either retrace our steps or go and sit on the centre seats beside Tzo, and there remain till we were requested to move.

The aide-de-camp, without understanding Russian, guessed what was the matter and vanished.

"Well, gentlemen, either let us return home or take suitable places. Did you speak to Tzo? How did he receive you?" I asked of Sosnowsky.

"Tzo-Tzoun-Tan has not yet arrived; it has been announced that he is coming directly." And as he spoke shouts arose, "*Lai-lé! Lai-lé!*" (he is coming!) and everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation. The thing was now explained. The cunning Chinaman had tricked us. The guns we had heard were only a make-believe. We expected him to come and meet us, whilst he on the contrary wished us to await his arrival. His position was in truth not easy.

Was it suitable that an old man, and a governor-general, should come forward and receive us? On the other hand, he slighted us by not doing so. Therefore the only course open to us was to enter a protest by leaving the field, but Sosnowsky judged this to be inadvisable.

Two lines of soldiers kept the road to the pavilion, and Tzo then appeared, preceded by a group of horsemen and two executioners, an indispensable symbol of the power of a great dignitary. These took up their position on either side of the way, leaning on their clubs.

Tzo came along at an amble on a superb charger; he wore a yellow dress and black hat (resembling a head-dress worn by Russian women called the *kokoschnik*). Four mandarins closed the procession at a certain distance. He stopped before the stand with a grave and frowning expression, and seemed quite aware of his high dignity and importance. Two mandarins lifted him off his horse, and he then ascended some steps to a platform where other mandarins respectfully awaited him, ready to execute the commands of the supreme governor of the country.

He saluted them, and looking to the right and left appeared to be searching for someone. He pretended not to see us, although our uniforms might be seen a mile off. At last he saw and greeted us with an amiable smile. He then went on, with three generals, to the middle terrace on the stand, where three empty chairs remained, probably placed there for us, but no one came to ask us to go to them. We stayed where we were on the left-hand terrace at a table by ourselves.

"Let us go now," said I to Sosnowsky.

"Why offend the old man?" replied the chief, "it is from ignorance of our customs that he has thus acted; I can see no intentional offence in all this."

"If the chief sees none," thought I to myself, "there is none," so I seated myself at the table. Tea and cakes were immediately brought, but all this did not make us forget the insult received and endured by us in silence. Although it was perhaps somewhat our fault, in my opinion we should not have submitted to this public humiliation. But my love of contradiction may have caused me to see this affair in a false light.

When Tzo was seated, mandarins with red buttons and blue buttons came in succession to salute him, and then commenced various infantry and cavalry manœuvres, which continued during three hours, with intervals for repose. After the army came the children, boys of ten and twelve years old, fifteen or twenty in number, to whom Tzo was teaching the art of war.

This little corps of cadets was called Youi Bine. One of the mandarins nearest Tzo gave the word, and they each came forward in succession and shouted, "*Kan-ouo!*" which meant, "Look at me," after which they returned to their places. They also went through some gymnastic exercises, and shot with bows and arrows or little guns, the whole accompanied with antics similar to those of a clown, and grimaces like those of a Chinese actor. Tzo seemed interested in this little troop; he praised them and joked with them, making all sorts of remarks. These children even

receive pay. When the martial marionettes had finished their gambols, they were exercised with most singular guns, consisting of nothing but the barrel, and testifying to the merciless derision of the English, who had sold these old guns to them stripped of the wood.

I had seen them in the arsenal, but had never imagined that they were used to shoot with. The hammer was not at the side, but above, and there was no trigger. It was placed at full-cock by pressing a spring at the side. The soldiers held the gun in both hands, planted it against their body, and took aim, looking to the left of the barrel. They then pressed the spring and the gun went off.

This short description will suffice to explain the result obtained by such guns, and the state to which the hands of the miserable soldiers were reduced.

I also saw them shoot at a target with the same guns, but loaded with powder and not with ball. But what a target! A ring half a yard in diameter, in the midst of which a circle of copper was balanced and fastened to a stick about as high as a man. The shooter places himself at five or six steps from this target, and if the shot makes the copper swing it is considered successful. Notwithstanding these conditions, most of the soldiers shot to one side and failed to move the copper circle. And Tzo-Tzoun-Tan had asked which nation would be victorious in war! How I should have liked to show him a Russian soldier! He would soon have seen the difference. After the manœuvres were over, the General's aide-de-camp came to ask us to lunch in the stand itself, but owing to the slight we had received from

"the excellent old man," we refused the invitation and went away.

To divert my thoughts from all this, I went with Tan-Loe to some of the shops and bought various things for my ethnological collection. The shops were tolerably well supplied, but the prices were three times higher than in Central China. They actually could produce some articles of European manufacture—candles, soap, bonbons, needles, glasses, and even matches and stuffs. During this walk I again saw a dead body lying in the street, covered with a dirty cloth. The owner of the shop near the spot where the accident had happened was in despair, as, according to Chinese law, he was responsible for any man who had died on his property or near his house. Of course he could not be accused of being guilty of his death, but he would have to give an account of the cause and of the dead man's circumstances. Such cases are taken before the tribunals, and threats and intimidations used to extort money. Dreadful things are sometimes the outcome of this. It is related that a beggar, wishing to revenge himself upon some merchant who had refused to give him money, went and stole a child belonging to a family on bad terms with the merchant, which he took to the shop and murdered. He then ran off and left it there. A beggar-woman he had previously engaged on his side testified that the merchant had killed the child. A trial took place, and the merchant, who was acquitted after he had spent the whole of his fortune on the case, was entirely ruined.

The dead man appeared to have been wasted away by

illness. I was surprised at the indifference of those who passed by. They paid no attention whatever, whether from hardness of heart, or perhaps from fear of being implicated, or more probably from being used to seeing vagabonds end their sad existence in the middle of the streets.

Instead of looking after the dying, the fear of a lawsuit makes a Chinaman beg the sick person to leave his house and go and die in the street, which they never refuse to do if they have strength to drag themselves out.

One evening that Tzo was at supper with us, I asked his leave to visit the prisons in the town. He failed to understand how I could want to do such a thing, and made me repeat my request, thinking he had misunderstood me. "How odd that you should wish to see such unpleasant things; they are a horrible sight," said he. "All the same if you are bent upon it, I will give orders that you are to be allowed admittance and shown everything."

Next day I went out with Tan-Loe, who understood the small amount of Chinese I could speak, and whose manner of speech was easier of comprehension to me than that of any one else.

We came to a building in no respect resembling a European prison. We were received by the chief mandarin and governor, a dry, severe, and rather rude old man; he treated us haughtily and with considerable scorn. It was only on hearing that I was a doctor that he became vastly more amiable; for having a chest disease, he thought he would consult me about it. After the consultation he handed us over to one of the prison warders, who led us

into a little street where he unlocked a door. At the bottom of the court was another door, also locked, which the warder at once shut after us. We entered a tolerably big court, surrounded by an earthen rampart; separate buildings ran round it with all their doors open. In the court the prisoners were exercising or sitting about. At the bottom of the court, on the terrace belonging to a little temple, a prisoner was seated alone on his bed. "The Governor," whispered the warder. He was tall, and had an expressive countenance; his long disordered hair fell on his shoulders, a long thick beard covered his chest, and the chain fastened round his neck went down his body, and separating into two parts, reached down to his feet. It would have been interesting to hear what the Governor's crime had been; but I could only discover that he was guilty of mistakes during the war. He was of the Mussulman type, but I was assured that he was Chinese.

Tan explained to the ex-Governor who I was and what brought me to China and into the prison. He had been two years in confinement, and seemed to have forgotten the past. It was very painful to see him standing in front of me. I could hardly persuade him to sit down again, and I seated myself beside him on his bed. The prisoner did not complain of his fate, but of a chest disease (chronic gastralgia), and I promised to send him some remedies. It was very sad to see a man in this situation, especially as his culpability was doubtful. Two years in irons already, and not to know how or when the punishment would end! I took leave of him and proceeded farther.

Near the wall were standing four Doun-Gans, two grown-up men and two boys of fourteen and fifteen; the two first, chained like the Governor, wore double bracelets on their wrists, so that their hands were crossed and all movement impossible. They could not even bend their elbows. The children were not in chains. Whether less guilty or too young, I know not. They were the last surviving Mussulmans of the town of Siu-Tchoou-Fou. The two boys' only crime was that their father and uncle had been the principal leaders of the Si-Nine-Fou insurgents when the Chinese of that town had been massacred by the Mussulmans. Both had been executed, and better had their children perished with them than have remained in life-long captivity. The keeper did, in fact, explain to us that they were only detained for the sake of precaution, that they might never avenge their father and uncle. They had been shut up for three years in absolute idleness, and not taught anything or given any occupation.

Certain buildings were inhabited in common by several prisoners. The rooms were tolerably large, but dark, as they were only lit by the door, which was shut at night. They were absolutely empty, neither beds, chairs, or tables, which seemed a cruelty, as the Chinese are accustomed to chairs and beds.

Whenever I went near a prisoner he went on his knees before me, and thus remained whilst he answered my questions. It was very difficult to make them get up; if I asked them another question they again went on their knees to answer it. Probably a rule is laid down on this subject.

Cellular imprisonment does not exist; the prisoners live in groups without class distinction. Thus in a division of very low-class prisoners there was a mandarin who had commanded five camps. Well known for his bravery, he had given full swing to his passions, not only in the enemy's country during the war, but also in his own country in times of peace. Having heard that he was going to be betrayed to judgment, he had taken flight and successfully remained in hiding during three years. He had only been captured three days ago and thrown into prison.

His face was common, and disfigured by small-pox, and he was chained to another man who was neither prisoner nor criminal, but a police soldier appointed to watch him. Twice a day the watcher was changed

Later on I heard that this mandarin had been accused of treason, and awaited his death-warrant from Pekin. He was to be quartered, and this news produced such an effect upon me that for a long time afterwards I kept thinking of him at the moment when he should be torn limb from limb.

There were fifty prisoners, including old men and boys. The youngest was nine years old, and was the son of the rebel chief I have just mentioned.

A very decent old man was imprisoned for being suspected of knowing where the money had been hidden belonging to a merchant who had been murdered near his farm. The others were guilty of pillage and assault, or merely suspected of crime.

I was thence conducted to another division for less important offences. No more chains, and the seclusion less

severe, but the position of the prisoners was no better. The dirt was sufficient to destroy the health of those breathing the vitiated atmosphere of this prison. Thirty-five people were crammed together in a corner where all the filth of the place was accumulated and all the dirty water emptied. As I passed through the gate to it the bad smells very nearly made me sick, and the bad gases in the air brought the tears to my eyes. The prisoners had the most miserable appearance, some in rags, others nearly naked, showing their bodies in a fearful state of dirt; most of them were bloodless or swollen with dropsy; some had scorbutic patches on their feet, and almost all had sore eyes.

I saw their gruel distributed; it was made of wheat and lard, and I took some and found it to be well cooked, thick, salted, and not bad to taste. They are given either gruel or rice three times a day, and tea whenever they like.

I next visited quite a new building, where I was received by another mandarin; he was young and polite, and showed me most of the instruments of torture employed in China.

First the bamboo-cane, *siao-pañ-tzy*, is held by the slender end whilst the thicker is applied to the legs. The number of stripes may amount to several hundreds. Even mandarins with the red button are not exempt from this punishment.

The *beï-houa-tiao-tzy*, composed of three bamboo switches, each of the thickness of a goose's feather, and tied together by a string. This elastic rod is used for flogging the back, and is a terrible punishment, only inflicted on those of low degree.

The *tzui-pa-tzy* has a wooden handle, to which are fastened two leather tongues. This instrument is principally applied to women. They are struck on the mouth with it for evil-speaking; but it is sometimes applied in a very humiliating manner to the officials of the lower grades. The guilty man goes on his knees and puts his head on the lap of the executioner, who is seated on a bench, and who then strikes his cheeks with the leather. This is said to be very painful, and to inflame the lips and cheeks of the unfortunate creature to whom it is applied.

The *gouañ-gouañ-tzy* is a simple instrument, but terrible in its effect, and consists of two canes of the thickness of two fingers. One of these has a knot at the end of it, and is fastened to the big toe in such a way that it cannot slip. With the foot thus held down, the condyle is struck with the second switch. Tan-Loe, who had seen this punishment inflicted, told me that although the bone was soon laid bare, they did not cease striking on that account. This is applied to the common people for thieving or for carrying off a married woman.

The next instrument was a bench with a perpendicular back at the end, in which a hole is bored. The guilty party has to sit down on it half undressed, and lean his head against the back; his plait is passed through the hole and fastened down in such a way as to make the smallest movement of the head impossible; his arms are also fastened backwards, and his legs are left free on the bench. Sometimes he is left twenty-four hours in this position.

I have already mentioned the *cangue*, which is formed

by square boards fastened to the neck. This is reserved for individuals accused of stealing or assault, and is worn for a month or more. The head is imprisoned night and day in this collar, and during the day the prisoners are exposed in the pillory.

We lastly saw an instrument formed by a sort of flooring upon which the prisoner kneels, and sometimes upon a chain laid on it as well. The stretched-out arms are passed through holes in the boards at the sides, the plait fastened to the plank behind, and the feet bound down by the ankles.

As may be easily believed, the sight of these instruments of torture is by no means agreeable ; but I had made up my mind to see as much as possible, so I requested of my own accord to see the knife or the scythe used for beheading, and filled with mercury to give it weight; also the column or boards on which quartering and strangulation take place. I then asked to see the prison for women, but was informed that there was none.

One fine day Sosnowsky announced that he was going to send the Cossack Pawlow to Russia with papers. "I am in no anxiety about him," he said; "the Chinese will take him from one stage to the other, and he will perform the journey like a great man."

From that moment nothing else was talked about. A duplicate copy of the contract for supplying the bread promised by our chief was written out, and was such a curious document that I cannot resist quoting its purport.

"Captain Sosnowsky, Staff officer of the Great Empire of

Russia, and Tzo the military Tzoundy and Governor of all Western China,

"Agree to this: In consideration of the military expedition against the Tartars in Western China, whence arises the necessity of providing food,

"Captain Sosnowsky, influenced by strong friendship for China, undertakes to furnish bread to the Chinese, for the sum of thirty roubles the tchetvert, lowering the price should it not be so dear in the district of Laïssan."

Pawlow then set out, provided with twenty roubles for a journey of three thousand versts (2,000 miles), but to be sure the Chinese were to arrange everything. Before leaving, the Cossack went to pay his respects to Tzo, who made him a present of sixty roubles. Tzo-Tzoun-Tan had got into the habit of coming to supper with us every other night to have a talk. He spoke as fluently as if he were reading, and I exceedingly regretted being unable to follow his discourse as well as I could have wished. He must, however, have known that we could not understand a word he said; perhaps he belonged to that class of talkers who speak for the mere love of hearing the sound of their own voices.

These conferences were only interrupted by the supper, which was always plentiful and well cooked. Tzo himself incurred the expense of it, and ate with a good appetite, calling out "*Tchi-tché-ghe Hao!* (eat this, it is good.) For my part, I was much more interested in trying to make out his conversation than in eating, for the interpreter, shaken and scolded every moment, got quite confused in his translations, and I fancy had occasion more than once to curse his

sad fate. At last the chief forbade him to translate what Tzo was saying, and told him he was to write it down afterwards.

One evening Tzo began discussing religion, and spoke very bitterly against missionaries and such Chinese as had embraced Christianity, saying that those who changed their religion ought not to remain in China. He spoke of Confucius with respect, and put him before Jesus Christ (Ya-Sou). He could not agree to the possibility of forgiving one's enemies.

"Is it not better, for instance," said I, "to forgive one who has struck you?"

"No," said Tzo, "it is better to return the blow."

At least he was sincere, for do we not ourselves often try to harm those we profess to befriend?

"Ya-Sou was a great doctor. We have Confucius, what do we want with Ya-Sou?"

The conversation then turned upon natural science. He knew but little about it and did not want to know more.

"We do not require telegraphs and railways; the first would corrupt the people and the second bring them loss of work and consequent starvation."

On another occasion he spoke of supernatural apparitions, and amongst others of flying dragons.

"There are big and little dragons with yellow heads. I have myself seen one flying towards a temple dedicated to it."

In saying these words he looked hard at us to see the effect produced.

"Were you afraid?"

"Afraid!" he cried, and seemed quite offended. "It is great good luck to see a dragon, and this was a fine one." Turning to Sosnowsky, he asked if any were ever seen in our country?

"No," replied the chief. "In our country angels fly about."

Thus Tzo acquired two new pieces of information about Russia; he now knew that cannibals existed and angels flew about.

Presently the conversation took a less abstract turn. "Of course you are all married," said the General, and without waiting for an answer he asked how we were able to leave our wives for so long?

He was greatly astonished to hear that only one of us was married; he would not believe it till Sosnowsky assured him that only the peasantry and shopkeepers married young. This information was very distasteful to him; he seemed to feel himself quite at sea, and to change the subject requested us to show him some of our things. He took great interest in the surgical intruments, the concertina, the microscope, and our magnetic wire.

One evening he invited us all to come and see shooting at a target. I alone went, with a Cossack, Tan-Loe, and two mandarins who had been ordered to accompany us. Although it was very early in the morning, the kitchen fires were already lit and the streets filled with a thick smoke as if the town were on fire. This, as I have said before, was caused by the chimneys coming out on the walls

instead of the roof as ours do. I explained to the Chinese that in this lay the principal cause of their sore eyes, and they quite concurred that I was right, although they could give no good reason for the continuance of this hurtful practice.

We went along a road through fields and tobacco plantations, said to be the best in all China, and I then skirted a big cemetery in the midst of the ruins caused by the late war.

At last we saw a blue tent in the distance, and several cannons placed in a row. These were the ranges. The commander of the arsenal, a native of Canton, came to meet and take me into the tent where tea was served; some other mandarins were there already, and set to work to examine me and my clothes, my cigar-case, pencils, and note-book. They would willingly have spent the day without disturbing themselves; but to put an end to the curiosity of the Chinese artillerymen, I suggested that we should go and see the shooting. The chief of the arsenal showed me four steel rifle-barrelled breechloaders which had been turned out in his workshops. These were put together with great care and were of various sizes; the biggest was a No. 9 barrel.

The modest director of the arsenal apparently took me for a great judge, for he would accept no praise, having but little confidence in his own science or capacity, and frankly admitting the superiority of Europeans. He contemplated his own creations with loving eyes as long as they were not loaded. Directly the charge was put in he fled to a distance.

No sooner had the target been placed, than they began loading the biggest gun, whilst the director of the foundry took refuge in the tent.

The soldiers worked skilfully and had no fear, but a mandarin seized me by the arm and tried to drag me towards the tent, pretending that we could see better, without having the noise so close to us. I thanked him, but wished to remain where I was. That he would not allow, as he did not desire to imperil my life should the cannon suddenly go off. So having stopped his own ears with cotton-wool, he dragged me forcibly towards a rampart. Fortunately he stopped short of it, as he might have been capable of taking me behind it. The shot went off and the cannon did not burst. They fired off the same gun several times and then the others, besides a small falconet held up by the soldiers with props. The firing was not bad as a rule, except that of the last piece, which was in itself worthless. When the shooting was over several cups of tea had again to be swallowed in the tent, whilst the mandarins examined me as if I were a prodigy.

From thence I went to see the prisoners of war, the Doun-Gan Mussulmans. These were the last survivors of their race, several millions having been exterminated by the Chinese during the war. These prisoners of war were lodged in a temple, with liberty to go into the adjacent street. They numbered twenty-six, and were mostly women and children. The Chinese called them "long headi," *Tchan-Toou*, or *Tchan Moou*, "long haired." The Cossack Smokotnine, who had known their countrymen at Kouldja, could converse

quite easily with them in the Kirghiz dialect. We learnt that they came from Khami, and that they had heard of the arrival of Russians at Lan-Tcheou. The good old women, of whom there were several, wept and threw themselves at my feet, imagining that I might be able to obtain their pardon and permission to return to their own country.

"They are quite persuaded," said the Cossack, "that you will give orders that they are to be reconducted to Khami. Their one thought is to leave this place."

I listened to their lamentations without daring to tell them that it was not my affair, and that it was not possible for me to remedy this state of things. I would fain have interceded for these old people and children but I knew Tzo's feelings towards his enemies, and soon had an opportunity of proving them under the following circumstances.

When I went to the prisons with Tan-Loe, the latter met an acquaintance who had been in confinement for three years. He had struck his groom, who fell ill and died, and his death was attributed to the blows. Tan knew him to be a worthy man, and begged me to intercede with the Governor-General, as he had already spent three years in prison. I hesitated for a long time, not wishing to mix myself up in the matter, but persuaded by Tan, I ventured to present my petition in favour of the prisoner one night after supper.

"Of whom do you speak? Of what prisoner?" said he. Tan, who was at the door, threw himself at the feet of the General, and remaining on his knees explained the matter.

"What is this man?" cried Tzo in his wrath, although he well knew him to be our travelling companion, and could



GOVERNOR-GENERAL TZO-TZOUN-TAN.

scarcely have failed to notice a man of his height. "Take care, you fellow, that I do not put you in prison too. Examine into the matter and see what he asks," added he, without giving the order to anyone in particular. And he then went off frantically angry.

This scene had produced a most disagreeable effect. One felt the power of an autocrat, capable of destroying those who displeased him.

One day when I came in, I found two strange mandarins, one of whom wore a red button. This in truth happened constantly; they came merely out of curiosity, to examine us and our occupations.

To-day the "red button" showed singular simplicity, and touched my hair, ears, nails, and fingers; then laughing aloud with delight, said to his companion, "They are exactly the same as we are ourselves; look for yourself;" and he then proceeded to give him my hand. Not being capable of carrying on a conversation with them, I informed them that Tzo was waiting for me to take his portrait, and begged them to return at a more convenient moment. They were not in the least offended, and both followed me.

Tzo-Tzoun-Tan was really waiting for me in full dress. I put him in front of me and began painting. About ten mandarins were collected behind me, and discussed the likeness under their breath.

Before I had done two strokes one would say, "No resemblance."

"How bad it is, not a trace of likeness," added another, doubtless supposing that I did not understand.

"It is not possible to do it; it is too difficult," said a third.

"He should not attempt to draw," said a fourth, and so on.

But they soon changed their minds and laughed with delight. The further the portrait advanced, the more their delight increased.

Tzo could not resist getting up and coming to have a look. He was extremely pleased, but remarked that I had made him look too young, and that I had not drawn the two-eyed peacock's feathers he had on his hat. Now these feathers fell back from the hat, and could not be seen in a front view. But Tzo declined to understand anything of this, and implored me to depict this sign of his high rank. I explained to him how impossible it was, and, not wishing to make such a mistake, I did not add them. When the portrait was finished Tzo and the mandarins set to work to examine it closely, or at a distance through their hands. At length Tzo sent for his binocular, a microscope, and a stereoscope to have a look at it through these three instruments.

It had been understood from the first that the portrait was to be for myself. The General, however, begged me to leave it with him.

"But it is precious to me as a souvenir."

He then asked me to make him a copy to send to one of his friends. I could not refuse it, and next day, when the copy was finished, I took it to him to give him his choice. He would not decide on his own responsibility, but made about twenty people come, who unanimously selected the first as

being the best. Tzo was quite enchanted, and hung it up in his own room, to which he repaired every now and then to look at it. But he could not get over the absence of the feathers (*linn-tzy*), and I feel certain that they were added later on by some Chinese artist.

We had now to begin thinking of taking our departure from Lan-Tcheou, and to this end the first thing that had to be done was to look out for conveyances. There were none to be had in the whole country, but thanks to the Governor-General's aide-de-camp, Schi, we were provided with carriages belonging to the administration. Whilst this was going on, this same Schi brought us very serious and unpleasant news. It appeared that the rebel Doun-Gans, commanded by Bi-Yan-Hou, had approached the town of Barkoul, and the war with China had recommenced.

This news overwhelmed Sosnowsky as "morally responsible." He lost courage, and walking up and down his room all day, sought for some way of getting out of this vexatious situation. He determined to stop in the town of Lan-Tcheou, and await the termination of the war, and on changing our route, leaving out the towns of Pi-Tchan, Tourfan, Ouroumtzy, and Manas.

Thus the departure from Lan-Tcheou was decided upon. One of Tzo's aides-de-camp came with two servants carrying a tray piled up with all sorts of articles. These were the farewell presents. Sosnowsky was quite overcome: he gave his thanks in broken sentences. "Tell Tzo-Tzoun-Tan how grateful we are; that he is very kind to us; only that I— If it had not been for the shipwreck— But why

such a quantity of things? However, I will send him presents from Russia," and so on.

Impressed, however, by this load of gifts, he requested the interpreter to find out if they were only for him, or if they were to be distributed among the company. The aide-de-camp hesitated, not knowing what to say; at length he gave him to understand that they were for him alone, and took his leave.

An hour afterwards he came to our room, bringing presents for Matoussowsky and me: four pieces of silk, four rolls of paper with sentences in Tzo's own handwriting, and two small heavy packets, which, to our astonishment, each contained 200 roubles. As may well be imagined, it was impossible to accept this gratuity. We gave profuse thanks for the roll of inscriptions, saying we should preserve them as a precious remembrance; but we firmly refused the silk, having already bought several pieces. As to the money, we considered the General meant it as an affront, and were very much annoyed, not being aware of having merited such treatment. The aide-de-camp was requested to return the money to Tzo and to explain to him that money was only given to servants in Russia in the same way as it was in China.

Schi, seeing how discomposed we were, tried to arrange matters by saying that the money had not been sent as a present, but to be distributed by us among the Chinese along the road for the small services they rendered us. There was a tolerably distinct allusion in this to our parsimony, as we generally gave the meanest tips, and sometimes none at all.

But this was our chief's affair, who had fixed the sums to be given and made a rule that we were to add nothing on our own account, which certainly prevented any jealousy or discussions among the soldiers.

Schi still persisted in begging us not to insult the General by refusing the money.

"We have no intention of giving annoyance to Tzo, but neither must he hurt our feelings," said we. "Tell Tzo that Pia and Ma are not servants but gentlemen."

Our chief, who overheard the conversation from the adjoining room, now came in and advised us not to be so *absurd* as to refuse the gift. He insisted that it was quite the usual thing in China, and that even high officials accepted money. We compromised the thing by keeping the silk to give to the Cossacks, but we steadily declined to pocket the money. Sosnowsky had the good taste not to insist on the point, and Schi departed with the 400 roubles.

During dinner the matter was again discussed, and Sosnowsky tried to prove that there was no offence meant. He said that Andreïewsky and Boiarsky had each received 50 roubles, and had not shown themselves in the least offended. Granted that the sum was not large, still it was not to be picked up every day.

"And why did Tzo not send money to you too?"

"It comes to the same thing. Amongst the Chinese things I have received I have just found the gold chronometer that he showed us, and the crystal service. You might as well say it is impertinent to offer articles of European origin."

"Certainly; you see you were offended by it. You probably have sent them back. It wounds our pride all the more from our being here in an official capacity."

"Of course, I ought to have sent them back, but I judged that it might offend the old man; he has done so much for us."

I was racking my brains to remember what he had done for us, when Schi returned with the aforesaid roubles, saying that as the General had intended them for us, he could not take them back again. "They are yours," he said, "and you can do what you please with them."

"In that case," said I, raising my voice, "throw them out at the window; give them to whosoever you like, or to the poor; only let us hear no more about them."

As he wished to report to the General that we begged the money might be given to the poor, we told him that he might do this on condition that he accepted an additional 50 roubles from us for the poor. And on this Schi went away. Matoussowsky and I would have wished to add an equal sum of 200 roubles, but we had no power to dispose of the general funds, and should have had some difficulty in finding this amount from our private means.

After dinner I glanced at the presents sent to Sosnowsky. There were chests of every species of tea, baskets with swallows' nests, baskets of very valuable saffron from Thibet, exquisite lacquer boxes, and a perfect pile of silken stuffs. Amongst other things, the crystal service and the chronometer shone in the foremost rank.

The aide-de-camp returned once more, and instead of

taking away the money he had left, he added 125 roubles to it for our Cossacks and Chinese attendants. In this way every one was to receive a gratuity. However, we eventually succeeded in persuading our chief to send back the money, which he did without adding anything to it. Tzo consented to take it back, and to distribute it as we wished, complimenting us on our kindness and magnanimity; at least, that is what we were told. Perhaps he knew nothing of it, and imagined that we had accepted the money.

Our chief agreed with us that the service and the watch ought to be returned, but said that everything was already packed, and that we should have to go after them. There was no doubt that although the sending of these presents was only customary, Tzo had a double intention. He had probably risked the watch and the service, thinking that they would be returned to him. He must even have felt certain that this would be the case, but he made a mistake in his reckoning, and if he had given us a severe lesson he received one himself in return. It cost him dear, and deprived him of a precious keepsake. To get rid of my bad temper I went to sketch in the garden adjoining the Governor-General's house. Almost all travellers speak with enthusiasm of the Chinese gardens, and describe them in the most glowing colours. I confess that none of those I saw made much impression on me. Not one fulfilled the expectations I had formed from drawings and descriptions. Their originality pleased me, and they were very convenient, but that was all. I found no enjoyment in them.

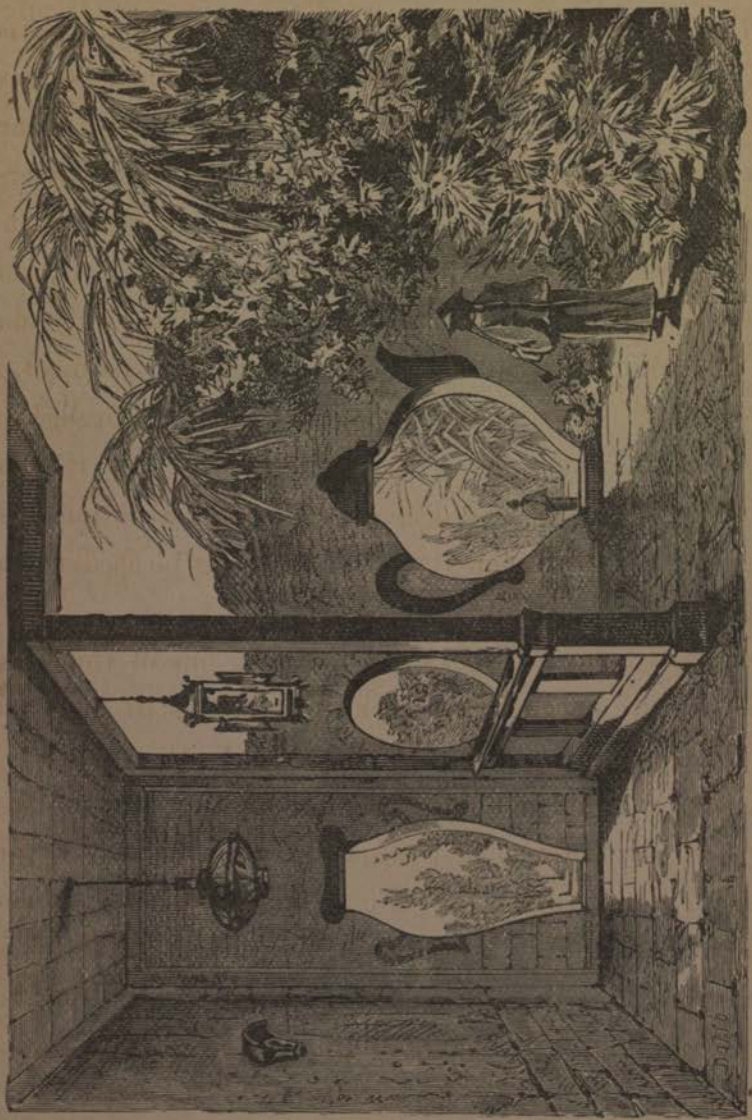


THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S GARDEN.

This garden was no exception to the general rule, and occupied a vast space divided by vestiges of the Great Wall, which went through it; the first half was the fruit, the other the flower-garden. Notwithstanding its brick-paved walks, its fountains, bridges, kiosks, arches, and doors shaped like teapots and jugs, it scarcely deserved the name of garden, being so entirely devoid of trees, verdure, and flowers. No shade, no little paths wandering amidst the bushes, no grass, no flower-beds. Its master cared not for flowers, and never came near it. There was no life in it, and I only met a few idle soldiers. Having, however, chosen a subject, I began to draw. When the soldiers saw this they brought a little table and some tea without my asking for it, and they themselves stood behind me watching my work and discussing my pencil and colours. The drawing pleased them, and made them chuckle with delight.

I also visited the Tzien-Si Club, as being one of the most remarkable buildings in Lan-Tcheou, both for its size and beauty. Its plan is very much like that of other temples I have described—several courts planted with trees, a theatre, temple, and dwelling-houses, the whole of great beauty and richness of detail, especially the green, grey, and yellow tiles on the roofs. The priests attached to this temple knew me, and always received me with mingled respect and pleasure. In a distant quarter of the town there was a temple from whence could be obtained a magnificent view, which I was most anxious to secure. The *hechan*, or priest, was also known to me, and, like the others, begged me to give him a small drawing. He brought me some Chinese

paper, upon which it was impossible to draw, but I was touched by his entreaties. He took me by the hand and led



GATES IN THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S GARDEN.

me to a place looking on to the terrace where there was plenty of light, and, pointing to a clean white wall, handed

me paint-brushes and Chinese ink, and bowed profoundly. An hour later he prostrated himself still deeper, and held up his two middle fingers to me in earnest thanks. All this time the crowd was kept below by the soldiers, for it was already known that there was a drawing on the wall of the temple representing mountains, the sea, and a boat with wheels of fire (a steamer), and every one insisted on seeing the foreign drawing. They were allowed to approach after I had left, and were so eager to see it that no one followed me into the street.

Next day Tan-Loe told me that the temple was full from morning to night of people wishing to get a sight of the drawing. It is easy in China for an artist to make himself a name.

Outside the town there were several temples surrounded with woods, and I visited three of them. The wall round one of these temples was covered with paintings representing a series of scenes, doubtless drawn from some fable. The picture began to the left of the gate, went right round the court, and ended up to the right of the same gate. I infinitely regretted having no one near me who could explain its subject. I equally regretted being unable to have the use of our photographic apparatus, which seemed to have become Sosnowsky's particular property, as he alone used them for reproductions. I would much have liked to take a drawing of this wall, but I had no time, and the work would have been most difficult, as I should have had to draw after the Chinese fashion without perspective, and to copy hands and feet of a monstrous description. As far as I could make

out, the subject represented was the incarnation of Buddha and the history of his development; the creation of man, his life, peaceful at first, but followed by a period of war and calamity; and, lastly, scenes of life beyond the grave. First there was chaos preceding the creation of the world; farther on, in the midst of this chaos, a ring suspended from the sky had a spiral sign upon it. Beside it was another circle, also placed in the midst of the clouds, but in which the spiral sign was replaced by a very small Buddha seated crosslegged with outstretched hands, as if blessing the world. In a third circle the same Buddha was supported by two still smaller personages. Next the scene represented good honest people enjoying every benefit, and wrapped in contemplation; farther on, scenes of war between men, then between the gods and men, and punishments by fire, by the sword, and by water, which the divinities were represented emptying out of vases into tiger-skins. A whole series of incomprehensible scenes were going on in the midst of mountains, clouds, and plains, on water and terraces, in gardens and houses. The personages in these scenes were depicted as flying through the clouds and being drawn along by rose-coloured horses with green manes, or in palanquins harnessed to dragons, and chariots drawn by oxen; others rode on storks or fabulous birds. The accessories of these scenes of a symbolical character are difficult to explain; for instance, clouds of black smoke issuing from the earth, and in these clouds five dragons' heads on long stalks, like flowers.

Tzo had suddenly ceased his visits since the day he had

sent the presents. Several days elapsed without his either coming or sending any one. The evening before our departure we went to take leave of him. It was prearranged that we should each, during the visit, politely express our regret for having shown offence, Matoussowsky and I at the money, and Sosnowsky at the watch and service having been sent. The chief was to speak first, and we could not see how he was to make this understood, as he had packed up the things as fast as possible, instead of at once returning them.

The Governor-General received us in the same room as on our visit. He wore the hat belonging to his uniform and a white silk robe. A second robe of yellow silk was fastened round his waist by an artistically fashioned silver buckle, and a sort of transparent black mantilla covered his shoulders. He apologized for not having been to see us for several days, owing to indisposition, and he was, indeed, looking ill. He was more than usually civil to us, as he doubtless had heard how annoyed we had been by his gratuities.

Sosnowsky began his speech in the most amiable tone, thanking the General for his kindness, cordiality, and hospitality, and continued in the following words: "I again repeat that these European articles were unnecessary;" then, waving his hand and turning towards us, "however, let us drop the subject; this is neither the time nor the place to speak of it. It is useless to quarrel over trifles."

Thus Tzo only received our thanks. He accepted them as his due, and then we turned to other subjects.

On this occasion Tzo gave us to understand that he con-

sidered his country equal, if not superior, to any other in the world, which increased my good opinion of him. Drawing comparison between China and other nations, he added that if Europeans distinguished themselves by new discoveries, the Chinese discovered fresh things in their very antiquities and in their writings, still far from being well known or sufficiently brought to light. On taking leave, he invited himself to dine that very evening with us. Shortly afterwards his servants came to prepare the feast, and in their wake came the General with his aides-de-camp. The ceremony of showing us to our seats and the salutations took place as on the first occasion, and it was he again who entertained us.

The idea of inviting him to dine with us had never entered our heads, and yet it would have been very easy; we had only to get a cook out from the town; but we were so occupied with our scientific and commercial persuits that we forgot the customs of the country and the rules of politeness. We had never given him anything whatsoever, excepting some sugar which Matoussowsky and I offered him, to his great gratification, for he confessed to never having seen it so firm and white.

The dinner, which was more plentiful than usual, went on for a considerable time. Everybody had eaten their fill before Tzo had finished. Conversation did not seem to flow; everyone seemed ill at ease. We might laugh and gesticulate as we would, but it was of no avail.

Not being able to endure the situation I got up, and pretending to be ill, begged Tzo to excuse my departure.

He expressed his regret, and made no attempt to detain me.

On the 10th of July our usually quiet quarters suddenly awoke to life; servants, soldiers, and drivers rushed and pushed each other about, and carried off our luggage. The Chinese of our acquaintance came to say good-bye; my patients asked for advice and remedies against future illness, and fresh patients, who had only heard the night before of my miraculous cures, came with other invalids.

Our departure was fixed for the morning, but we were only ready at one o'clock. We had bought riding-horses, fearing to find none on the road, but the photographer and interpreter having none, Sosnowsky begged two horses from the administration, which were duly granted. They still needed two saddles, and the chief begged leave to borrow them, but the General made him a present of these also.

Whilst we awaited the signal of departure, the servants had already invaded our rooms to sweep and clean them. I know not whether this haste was usual in China, or whether it only showed their joy at and impatience for our departure.

The mandarins' and soldiers' expression of countenance gave me clearly to understand that the free quarters, the entertainment of fifteen people during a whole month, and the presents Tzo had bestowed on us, did not necessarily include the gift of their friendship.

Tzo did not return to wish us farewell, and refused to receive us, on pretext of being ill, although our chief expressed a desire that he should do so. The aide-de-camp, Schi, looked after everything—a big good-natured creature,

who during our stay had filled the post of commissioner for us with the greatest zeal. For his services he received an oilcloth mat, a pot of pomatum, and a little egg, with a small chain of glass beads! The celebrated shipwreck was always the excuse. But all sorts of presents were to be sent to him from Russia. Matoussowsky and I gave him 100 roubles to distribute among the servants, cooks, grooms, and soldiers that had been attached to our household.

At last we started, and not without regret on my part. It gave me great pain to say good-bye to Schi, who was an excellent creature, and to my patients and the soldiers. And they also expressed their regret as best they could, or perhaps I only imagined they did. There was no demonstration in our honour, not a salute, not a flag. No one was sent by the Governor, and not one of the mandarins came to accompany us to the gate of the town, as was usually done in China. Quantities of favours had been heaped upon us, but no honours.

CHAPTER V.

Along the Great Wall—Its Present Condition—The Ruins—A few words on Rhubarb—Our New Travelling Companions—Town of Lian-Tcheou-Fou—Town of Youn-Tchen-Sian—A Fortified House—Statue of the God Fou—Town of Han-Tchen and its Edifices—Book-Hawkers—Watch and Outposts—Town of Sou-Tcheou—Dismissal of Tjou—Fortress of Tzia-Youï-Gouañ—End of the Great Wall.

July 10th. We crossed the bridge and followed the left bank of the Houang-Ho, across barren mountains covered in places with a greyish grass. Further on we came to cotton-fields in full bloom, melons, water-melons, and pumpkins, with straw huts for the caretakers; also fruit-gardens abounding with peaches and apricots. Along the road we passed an endless succession of ruined villages and little fortresses, and once came upon a decapitated head suspended in a cage.

The road goes along the Great Wall, at this spot merely an earthen rampart, and only remarkable for its length. This famous and historical monument is rapidly drawing to the term of its existence, and before long the elements will have completed their work of destruction.

The wide and rapid Yellow River was wrapped in a blue mist, especially towards its right bank. We soon left it for good and all, and turned down a weird and desolate ravine, coming from time to time upon a

house. I heartily pitied those who were condemned to live there.

July 11th. The same scenery as yesterday, but the country rather more populous. The villages were not built in the valley, but on the mountain-tops, and on the slopes were to be seen a considerable number of apertures, denoting subterranean dwellings, seemingly deserted. Hardly any birds, even in the fields, of which however there were also very few. These were sown with barley, wheat, and *brassica campestris*, an oil-producing plant. We saw numerous lizards and marmosets running about among the trees, making a sort of monotonous whistling sound. Threatened by a storm, we had to quicken our pace, and so arrived in good time at Ti-Tzia-Pou.

In one of the streets of this immense village was an enormous trunk of a dead tree, sawn through its upper half and stripped of its bark. Perched on the top, and on the sides, were little brick chapels surmounted by statuettes of the gods. There were four of these, and another inside the trunk.

July 12th. The aspect of the country now changed completely; the road went across a wide, well-cultivated, and populous plain. Besides a few isolated farms, we came on whole villages recently built, and dating from the Doun-Gan invasion. They were all fortified or surrounded by a high earthen rampart with towers at the sides. A single door gave admittance, and the inmates were quite hidden from the outside world.

The rain never ceased all day, and thoroughly soaked the ground. We halted for the night in the small town of Pinn-

Fann-Sian. The cool temperature during the night, or rather the cold, betokened that we were a considerable height above the level of the sea.

July 13*th.*—Before leaving the town I climbed its wall to get a view of the plain, stretching towards the north. It must have been populated in former days; now there were nothing but ruins. To the right the Great Wall wound across the hills.

We met many riders and pedestrians, and for the first and only time I saw a fair-haired Chinaman. The natives of the country we now passed through were not however the least Chinese in their type. They did not even wear the costume, and reminded me much more of our own peasants. They were all most obliging, but not the least inquisitive. Perhaps the memory of recent disasters inspired them with fear in the presence of strangers, and led them to avoid us as much as possible. One man left the road and plunged into the fields, waiting in the distance till we had passed; another, talking with a companion, stopped and remained silent till we had gone by; a third dismounted and pushed his donkey off the road, although it was wide enough for both to pass.

The road now approached the Great Wall, and I was able to examine these gigantic remains of antiquity. I have already said that this monument is nearly in ruins, and diminishes more and more every year, especially in the upper part; in some places it has altogether ceased to exist, in others it is tolerably well preserved. Near the ravines it forks and forms a court, which easily holds three or four

hundred people. The part of the wall which touches the ravine is surmounted by a tower with embrasures, but very



LITTLE TEMPLES ON A DEAD TREE.

few of these towers are now in existence. A ditch runs along the wall.

The fauna and flora of the country are most varied. I hoped, but in vain, for a halt of an hour or two to collect a few specimens of the latter.

The heat was suffocating, and we were just deciding to stop in the next village and have some tea when we noticed a house hung with red drapery. It was easy to guess that this decoration was in our honour, and very shortly a Chinaman came to welcome us in the name of the village, and invited us to breakfast and to rest ourselves.

Here the plain turns to the west, and is watered by a little river. Its horizon is bounded by imposing snow-capped mountains; the Tzy-Lian, according to Williams's map.

Pickets of three or four soldiers were stationed along the road at short intervals, and in turns mounted guard on the little clay towers. They filled the place of the telegraph, signalling from one tower to another with little black flags, and these were now applied to greet us on our journey. Unceasingly gazing into space for the possible appearance of the enemy must have been a sad mode of existence.

Near the village of Tcha-Kou-I, where we were to pass the night, we met four horsemen, even in the distance recognising them to be of a race other than Chinese. I made Tan-Loe ask them who they were, and they answered that they belonged to the Fan-Tzy, Si-Fan, or Tangout nation, and inhabited the Province of Kan-sou, paying tribute to China. They were dressed differently to the Chinese, allowed their hair to grow, and did not wear a pigtail. They had a language and a written character of their own, but were also acquainted with Chinese. I

begged them to come next morning that I might take their portraits, to which they willingly assented.

July 14th. We were now in the neighbourhood of the mountains where rhubarb (*taï-houan*) is indigenous, and I inquired of the Chinese whether they knew anyone who had to do with gathering this root, or who traded in it. They took me to a specialist, from whom I tried to extract some information, aided by the Cossack. This man had been three times at Kiachta with caravans of three to four hundred camels loaded with rhubarb, which he sold to the Russians, but he could not exactly tell me its market value, as he exchanged it for gold, silver, or furs. He asserted, however, that he had made a profit of a rouble on every *guine* (about a pound and a half weight), that is 72,000 roubles on the whole lot, which appeared rather apocryphal. This Chinaman may have been rich in former days, but certainly had now no appearance of wealth.

The insurrection of the Mussulmans had brought on a cessation of traffic with Kiachta, but no quarrel between the Chinese purveyors and the Russian buyers. The rhubarb is found at two days' journey from the station of Tcha-Kou-I. It grows wild on the flat, on hills, or in damp places. There are no regular plantations; the plant attains a height of two *sajènes* (or more than four yards and a half), and its flowers are white. The roots ramify and penetrate far into the earth; they are dug up in the months of August and September, when the leaves begin to wither. The older roots are most in request, being tender, succulent, and yellow in colour when just taken out of the earth. The Chinese

distinguish the male from the female plant, and prefer the former, as being heavier and juicier. The fine black bark is taken off, while the root is cut up and dried in-doors. Every one is free to collect rhubarb, but the Government reserves the right to levy an impost on all merchandise imported upon the proceeds of the sale. The best rhubarb comes from Si-Nine-Fou, and the next best from Lian-Tcheou, Lan-Schan, and Schann-Fann-Tzei-Tzy, three days' journey south of Lian-Tcheou. The Chinese doctors prescribe it as medicine, and the price of a *guine* on the spot is three hundred sapeques.

The four Tangouts we had met the evening before kept their promise, and came to sit for their portraits. I gave them each a piece of silver worth fifty kopecks, which they had not in the least expected.

But all this took time, and I had to hurry onwards. The ascent was continuous, and the horizon widened proportionately. The air was cold, and the sun failed to warm us. On the north-west snow-capped mountains edged the plain; all along the road we passed a succession of ruined villages, one of which seemed almost large enough to have been a town, but it was entirely in ruins, with nothing but bones and rubbish strewn about. The entrance-gate, heaped up with stones, might have represented the vast tomb of several thousand human beings.

At breakfast-time we stopped near a miserable hamlet, where nothing was to be got, not even boiling water; no one would so much as listen to us, but all turned away, requesting us to go farther on.

On the hill above this hamlet was a small fort, and the mandarin in command stood on the edge of the wall staring at us with much curiosity. A soldier came to tell us that our colleagues had already breakfasted and had gone on; no one having invited us to do so, we were obliged to invite ourselves, putting aside any pride or modesty.

They might, of course, have closed the gate in our faces, but did not go so far as this. The mandarin received us very coldly, and with visible annoyance; but we were, nevertheless, given boiling water for tea, brandy, ham, and bread. We took our breakfast under the gaze of a band of soldiers and officers, and afterwards paid the servants who had attended upon us. The mandarin was interested in my paper and pencils, so I gave him some of each, on the strength of which he became more amiable, and went as far as the gate with us.

A little farther on we reached the highest point of our journey, the pass of Ou-Sou-Linn, or Ou-Chi-Linn, 10,900 feet above the level of the sea. The red granite mountains presented a magnificent sight, although the weather was cloudy; it rained persistently. We had to quicken our pace to avoid the hurricane threatening to burst upon us, and succeeded in reaching a sort of shed that was to shelter us for the night.

July 15th. We had now reached the north side of the hills, where we found as many ruins as on the south side; but numerous villages were in process of reconstruction. We met several carts loaded with wood, doubtless brought from afar, as I saw none in that neighbourhood. Any pedes-

trians and horsemen that we met looked wretched, and were covered with dirty rags. Two men we met were eating flour in handfuls.

The soldiers of our escort were armed with pikes and guns. Their pikes were not much good, and their guns absolutely worthless. One gun had no ramrod; another had no hammer; a third had one, and it could be raised by the thumb, but even when thus placed at full-cock, pressing the trigger had no effect; the hammer would not fall on the cap, and consequently there could be no explosion. This arose from some internal defect in the lock, and the gun was, of course, useless till it was put right. Moreover, as none of the men had cartridges, the guns could only be for mere show.

To-day's stage was only forty-five *li;* it was still daylight when we got to Gou-Lan-Sian, situated at the foot of the mountains. These, which had until now bounded the horizon, gradually widened out over the plain called Lian-Gobi (the Little Gobi), which we were about to cross. Gou-Lan-Sian is a small, miserable old town, but had escaped the general devastation of the civil war. Directly after dinner I took a walk round it, accompanied by a policeman. We went along the top of the bastions, and chased the sheep grazing on it before us, for I could not turn them, as the wall was very narrow. With the exception of a few old temples, nothing attracted the eye. I took two sketches, however, in presence of some Chinese, who behaved very well, but not well enough to please the policeman, who spat in the faces of those he considered came too close to us.

July 16*th*. We left Gou-Lan-Sian in overpowering heat, the streets being quite empty in consequence. I did not envy the soldiers who had to walk alongside of us carrying our odds and ends. Besides the soldiers, a considerable number of Chinese, including children, accompanied us. Hunted from their country by the enemy, they had lived from hand to mouth since the war, always hoping to return to their homes one day, and only waiting their opportunity to do so. Our journey seemed a good chance for them to join our caravan as porters; others replaced the soldiers who preferred remaining at home to taking a useless walk; whilst others came merely for the pleasure of our society. They left us, having achieved their purpose, and received a slight gratuity for the small services rendered.

I cannot exactly remember where we fell in with a poor, ragged, and very ugly but active little boy of about fifteen. For three or four days he had carried some of my little things, and thinking he would stop at Gou-Lan-Sian, I told the Cossack to pay him perhaps a little in excess of the others.

"He had better be paid later on for the whole time," answered the Cossack. "This boy is *transparent*."

"How transparent?"

"I mean that he will stay the whole time with us as far as Han-Tcheou, or, if these gentlemen desire it, he will go with us to Russia, for he has only an uncle, the father of a family, and very poor, and he will not want to keep him."

The boy continued to follow us, and the name "transparent" stuck to him. He went ragged and bare-headed

beside us, streaming with perspiration as he ran along. I told the Cossack to buy him shoes and clothing at the next town, and meanwhile we gave him a towel, which he thankfully wrapped round his shaven head as a protection against the sun and in sign of his mourning, according to Chinese fashion.

The village of Schan-Ta-Pou, surrounded by an earthen rampart with four gates, was thirty *li* from Gou-Lan-Sian, and we were very thankful for the breakfast and tea offered us by the inhabitants.

Before leaving the village I spent a few minutes under the shade of some trees in a temple court of great antiquity, in the midst of which an altar of very singular shape was erected. The inscription, deciphered by Tan, set forth that the altar had been erected in the first year of the reign of Tzian-Loun, called by some biographers "The Louis XIV. of China."

Shortly afterwards we reached another village, Tzyn-Bian, entirely in ruins, and apparently totally abandoned. But the barking of a dog denoted the presence of inhabitants, and shortly after we perceived two Chinese, one of whom wore an official hat. They came towards us, and bending their knees in greeting, begged us to follow them. Among the ruins was a recently rebuilt house, small but clean. It belonged to the administration, and was designed for the use of mandarins travelling on duty. After washing in hot water, according to Chinese custom, I dined and went to look at the ruins. I only saw one house, with the exception of that belonging to the administration, but wreaths of smoke

told me that others must exist. About thirty Chinese, men and children, had assembled around me, all with sore eyes, the cause of which I explained to them. They understood that I was a *daï-fou* (a doctor), and agreed with what I said. Often when I addressed a group of men, only two or three would understand, but they always undertook to explain to the rest.

During the night I spent in this place, my slumbers were disturbed by the perpetual noise of the ceiling, which being made of oiled paper stretched on a bamboo frame, went up and down at the least breath of air, making a sound like the rustling of very stiff petticoats; moreover, two mice took to fighting inside it and scratching at the paper to such a degree that I expected every moment that they would fall into the room or on to my bed.

July 17th. To-day's journey offered nothing noteworthy, beyond some newly built and fortified villages occupied by the survivors of the war.

After the disappearance of the enemy the Chinese clung to their homes, and like ants proceeded to reconstruct habitations more suited to protect them from danger. During the day they worked in the fields and returned to spend the night in their little forts, strongly barricading the one door giving admission through the loam wall surrounding their dwellings. I moreover saw a sight very rare in China, namely, a field of potatoes, and a camel, precursor of the steppes of Mongolia.

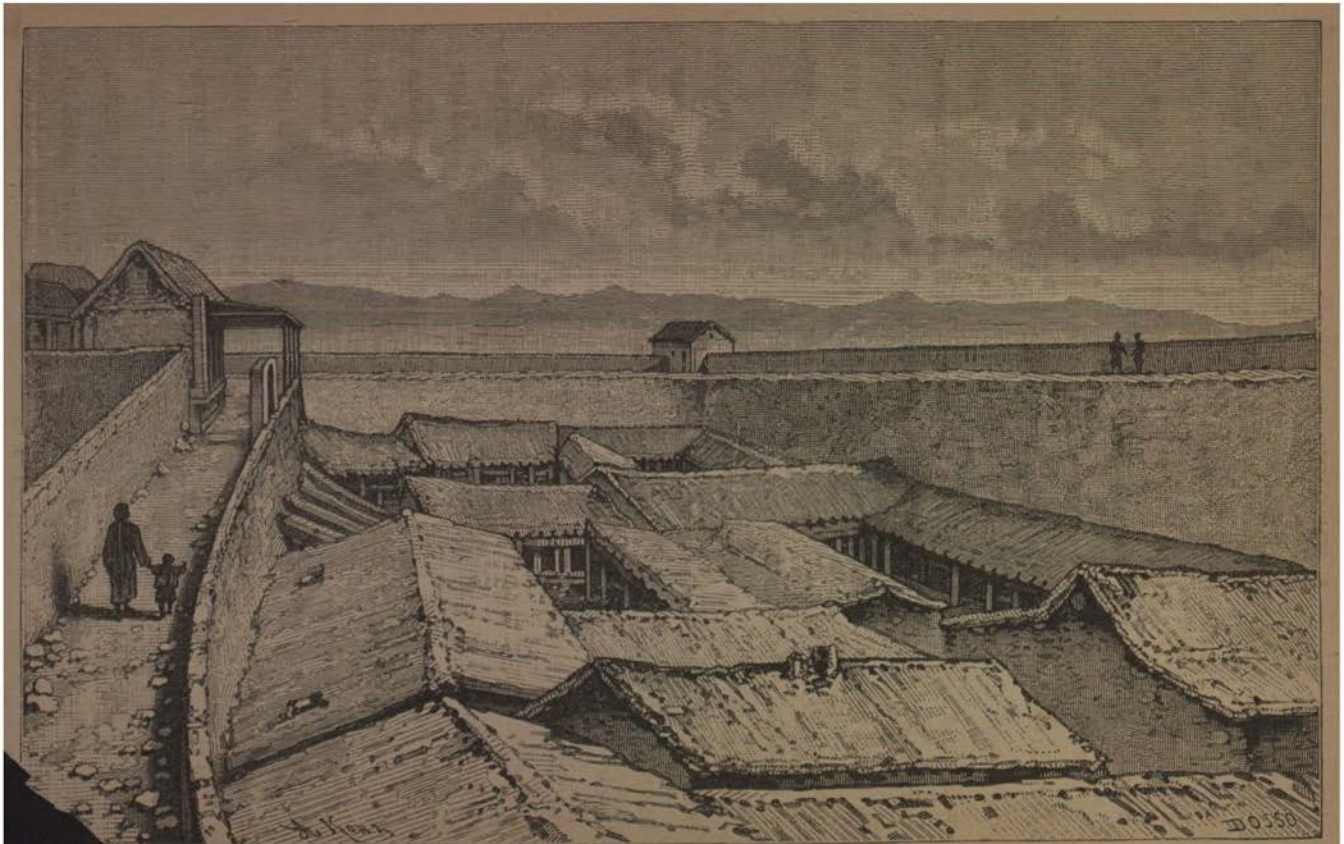
Further on we saw the tall and slender pagodas of Lian-Tcheou-Fou, appearing like columns in the distance, then

the towers, and finally the wall of the town. Many monuments of great originality struck the eye in the numerous cemeteries surrounding the town; they resembled *iourtas* or arcades in long and picturesque lines.

Over the entrance-gate of the wall surrounding Lian-Tcheou-Fou, a great temple arose, consecrated to the tutelar deities of the town. The first street leading from this gate was wide and dusty, and the people looked at us with some curiosity. Almost every house had its retail shop, with stalls in front as well, kept by vendors of fruit, chiefly apples and beans. Many women were employed in selling these, a very unusual sight in China.

I imagined we were already in the interior of the town, but another wall showed us that we were still in the outer town, *vaï-tchenn*, and that we must get through a second brick gateway to reach the inner town, or *li-tchenn*. Another street equally wide and well-paved boasted of side-walks; and a compact crowd, much exercised by the arrival of strangers, swarmed around us. The town was rather pretty, and planted with trees. There were many fine shops and a magnificent arch, giving it a most picturesque aspect. Donkeys and hens united in making a most terrible noise. We saw water-carriers trying to make their way to the wells; farther on a prisoner in disgrace exposed to public view, and a conjuror vainly trying to divert the attention of the crowd from us.

The street was crossed in the middle by another at right angles, and from this point we could see the four gates of the inner town: at last having gone through several streets



FORTIFIED HOUSES.

and lanes we reached the house where our quarters had been made ready. The porch was decorated with blue and red stuffs, and soldiers in brand new hats kept the crowd in order. The house was new and clean, but not large.

July 18*th*. Orders for our departure having gone forth, it was now discovered that we were deficient in almost everything required. Every instant we had to send to the local authorities to ask for what was necessary. Whilst Matoussowsky was taking plans I was busy measuring the outer gate to the north and found it to be nine feet deep and fifty feet high, the former being the thickness of the wall. We travelled sixty *li* that day.

July 19*th*. The same heat as yesterday. On the horizon we saw the southern mountains (Nan-Schan or Lan-Schan). When we reached the village of Schan-Schi-Li-Pou,* we found there was not even a kettle to be had. I asked a Chinaman if the living were good there, and he replied, "Yes, but there is nothing to eat." There was not much to complain of! And this answer was made quite cheerfully, as if it were only the natural order of things.

Three hours later we reached the town of Youn-Tchen-Sian, whose exterior suburb was surrounded by an earthen rampart in ruins. The inner town had not suffered from the war. The principal street was very wide and quite clean, a rare occurrence in China, but the air was pestilential. The inhabitants were very disagreeable and rude,

* The Chinese name their villages from the neighbouring towns, and add the words *li*, a measurement of distance, and *pou* a village. Thus San-Schi-Pou, village ten *li* from the town of San; San-Schi-Ou-Li-Pou, village fifteen *li* from the town of San.



TOWN OF YOUN-TCHEN-SIAN̆.

making fun of us, although not actually addressing us. They took us to be English. Personally their rudeness did not affect me, and I walked about the streets quite undisturbed. They looked upon me as a sort of monster, with mingled curiosity and contempt, tinged with a good dash of fear, but in the end we became friends.

July 20th. The stage was not very long to-day, so we had time to see the town. Our attention was at once attracted to two beautiful temples, a great tower, and a big public place, the whole presenting quite a fine appearance.

I made a drawing of it, and then went up the tower to get a bird's-eye view of the town. It was built very regularly, the streets wide and clean, and there were a great many elms and poplars in the gardens. Several towers crowned the walls, and amongst them one had a very curious circular roof.

As we were going back I noticed a door and window in a courtyard with a very original lattice. I may mention that this lattice-work had long attracted me, and had our journey not been *so* hurried, I should have been able to make a fine collection of designs from it. However, I succeeded in getting a few, and when time failed me I rubbed black all over a sheet of paper and then applied it to the lattice, thus obtaining a faithful life-size copy. The Chinese paper being strong although fine, was eminently suitable to this sort of drawing, and also to copying inscriptions on stones or walls. Not having any such paper about me, I begged a Chinese to go and fetch some for me, which he did with alacrity, and when I explained what I was going to do, he ran and got me a stool, that I might reach the window with greater

facility. Some of them held it all the time for me, and when they inquired why I was doing this, I told them that the design was very beautiful, and that I desired to have a window like it in my own house. This pleased and flattered them greatly, and to enhance the merits of their town they told me the artist was a native cabinet-maker; some of them even ran to fetch him. I complimented him on his work, but he was very modest about it. I then tore a sheet of paper out of my note-book, and to leave him a remembrance sketched my own likeness and offered it for his acceptance. The onlookers recognized the drawing and uttered exclamations of approval. The cabinet-maker ran off with it greatly delighted, accompanied by a crowd of admirers. I only mention this fact to prove how easy it is to disarm the distrust and hostility of a Chinese crowd.

Further on I met a group of mandarins on foot, wearing their parade hats, with the exception of one who seemed older than the others, and went bareheaded, notwithstanding the sun's burning rays. If he was of a superior rank to the others he had a right to go bareheaded.

He turned towards me, asking to see my drawings, and put out his hand to take them before I had time to answer. I politely withheld them, saying in Russian that I was not aware to whom I had the honour of speaking. They understood me, and presented their commanding officer, saying, *Da-loe* (great lord). He was prefect of the town, and after the customary salutations, set to work to examine my sketch. It is really surprising to see how much interest the Chinese take in the art of drawing. My friend recognised the

buildings of the town, and pointed along the paper with his finger, which fortunately was adorned with an enormously long nail and left no traces; and meanwhile I set to work to take his portrait. This he at once perceived, straightened himself, and putting on an ironical smile, stood perfectly still. Some bursts of laughter from the chattering crowd were immediately repressed by signs, as would be done in the presence of any important personage.

"Enough," said I, when it was completed, and the mandarin eagerly flew to see his portrait, begging me to give it to him, which I reluctantly did, receiving endless thanks. At the same moment Matoussowsky joined me, with Tan and the Cossack, who brought my horse. The good-natured mandarin walked to the gate with me, carrying his portrait like some holy image.

Once more we were on the road, collecting plants and chasing the butterflies about the banks of the canals. As on the preceding days, a violent storm was again on the point of overtaking us, with no shelter anywhere, and my umbrella broken by a gust of wind when the great drops began to fall.

The soldier and the boy named Transparent had already taken refuge from the wind and rain under a wall, and I followed them. This wall was scarcely any protection, and I feared that another gust of wind would bring it about our ears. I had seldom seen such a storm; the lightning was incessant, and terrific claps of thunder rapidly succeeded each other.

The two Chinese were soaked to the skin, and my poor

horse, streaming with water, stuck out its head to get its ears under my umbrella.

Half an hour after it cleared up, the sun shone out, and wading through mud we rejoined our baggage-waggons. We soon arrived at a ruined village, where quarters had been reserved for us in the new Government house which served as station.

July 21*st*. Nothing of note. We stopped for the night in the village of Sia-Kou, which had barely risen up again from its ashes. We were received in the guardhouse. All night drums beat, trumpets resounded, bells rang, and cannons fired. I could not make out why, as the enemy had entirely disappeared from the country.

July 22*nd*. We left after breakfast. The storm had cooled the air; the poor children in the streets shivered with cold; a few rags barely covered their shoulders, and I wondered how they ever got through the winter.

Our road went through a valley surrounded by mountains, and a picket of cavalry joined us to insure our safety. Half way through the stage we came to a fortified dwelling-place, where the inhabitants had received orders to give us dinner. It was an excellent opportunity for becoming more nearly acquainted with this style of abode.

To enhance the solemnity of the occasion, its poor tenants had ornamented the front door with an old piece of red silk. The interior was partitioned into several rooms, each having its own particular use. An old man came to meet us and invited us to enter. The door was shut and made fast to the threshold by a slab of stone. It was very difficult to

move it on account of its weight; it was secured inside by two solid bolts. After crossing several passages and court-yards, we reached the room reserved for us. The old man begged us to be seated, and busied himself with the dinner, which was immediately served. He was seventy-eight years old. He might have given us many interesting details of past events had he been more intelligent and communicative. But for the time-being he was entirely taken up in examining us, and especially Matoussowsky's fair hair, which he touched several times, as did his son (forty years of age), who waited on us at dinner. I asked his permission to go over the whole house, which seemed quite flattering to him, and went up the surrounding wall with his son, thence obtaining a view of a regular labyrinth of courts and passages. The wall was tolerably wide, and had a parapet with loopholes for firing in time of siege. In several places heaps of stones were collected to throw down on the enemy should occasion arise. I learnt from my guide that the building, like all others of the same kind, did not belong to one proprietor, but to a community of several families. It contained four families, thirty-two souls in all, and the old man I had taken for the owner was only the head of the colony. Each family had its separate house and courtyard, and a place besides for the labourers and domestic animals. It had taken three years to build, and had cost 6,000 roubles. I began drawing the whole thing, witnessed by some of the inmates who had climbed the wall, and such was their love of art that even the old man, although hardly able to crawl from asthma, came up

to beg me to leave him some sketch as a remembrance. I never refused those sort of requests, and drew him something in the style of a railway and a steamboat, with which he was delighted. I wondered to myself whether he would ever live to see the reality of my sketch. As I write he is certainly no longer of this world, but I am sure that my little drawing is still in existence, and if ever a Russian traveller passes by that spot he will see it there with his compatriot's signature.

Towards evening the towers and walls of Schan-Dan-Siañ appeared at the foot of blue mountains, and near them a fortress, presenting quite a threatening aspect with its brick walls and high towers. At the entrance to the town a surprise was in store for us. Instead of a street, a garden lay to our left with a rapid stream running through an arch in the wall and a row of houses on the right-hand bank.

There were very few people out of doors, but as yet we were only in the outer town. We soon went through the gate to the more populous and cheerful inner quarter, one of the best types of a pretty Chinese town.

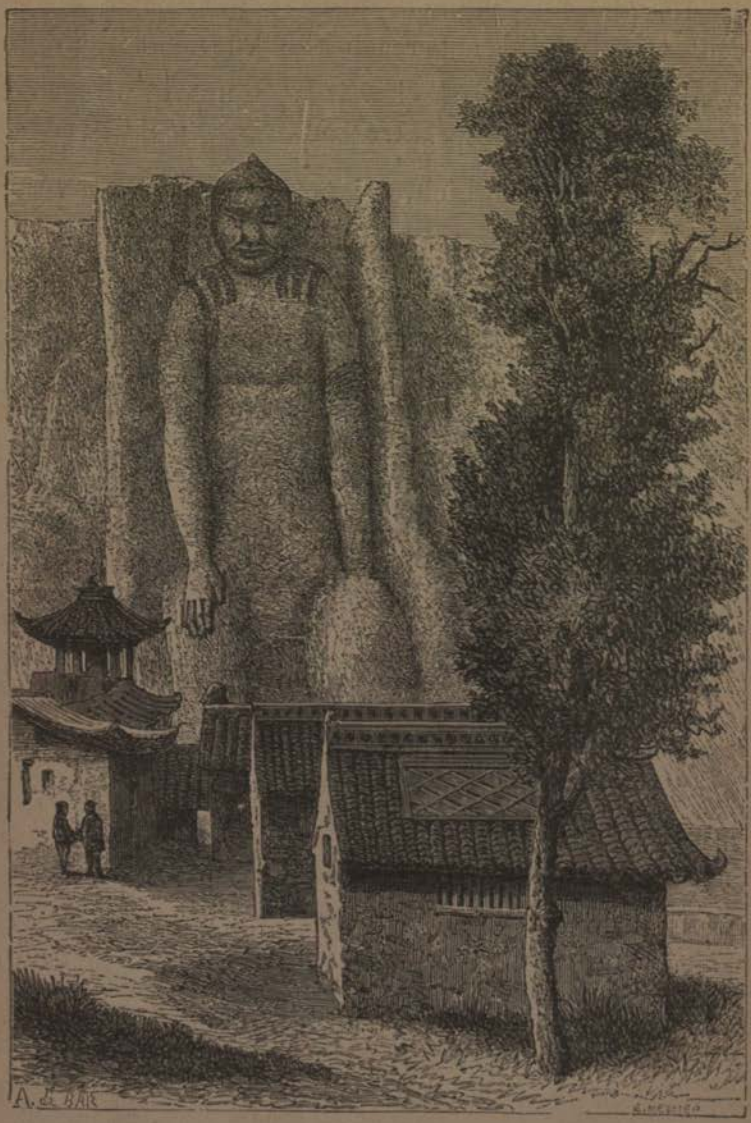
July 23rd. Sosnowsky having previously declined to let me engage an interpreter on my own account, had here picked up a boy of ten years of age. This boy bore the curious name of Pa-Schi-Sy, which means "eighty-four." I took a dislike to him from the first. He did eventually turn out to be no better than a thief, and we were obliged to get rid of him later on at Khami.

Tan showed me a clump of poplars and some pretty



ENTRANCE TO THE TOWN OF SCHAÑ-DAN-SIAÑ.

temples not far from the road, telling me that there was an interesting statue of the god Fou or Da-Fo-Ye in this neigh-



COLOSSAL STATUE OF THE GOD DA-FO-YE.

bourhood. Soon I saw an enormous head towering above the trees, and then the whole statue, represented as sitting

on a chair. It was made from the clay of the neighbouring hills, and might be more than eight sajenes (more than eighteen yards and a half) in height. The roofs of the adjacent temples did not reach the knees of the divinity. From an artistic point of view it was not of the slightest value. The head, without any neck, was sunk into an exceedingly lengthy body, which, taken separately, was very like a long tube slightly flattened. The arms were of inordinate length, and the fingers of the right hand, placed on the knee, looked very wooden. It was, therefore, more by reason of its deformities that the statue was curious.

July 24th. The rain still continued, after falling all night. The inhabitants warned us to be on our guard, saying there were bands of brigands in the neighbourhood.

This news brought consternation to our chief. Being "morally responsible for everything," he entirely lost courage. "Dear, dear," he exclaimed, walking up and down the room, "if only we could get safe to Khami." A detachment of the army awaited us in that town, at least so the Chinese informed us. Indeed, Sosnowsky had requested that a company of soldiers might be sent to meet us, but this was not done.

At first barren and stony, the valley became more and more fertile as we advanced, thanks to an abundant supply of water. Streams and irrigating canals abounded in every direction, and large fields lay around us. The water in the canals fell foaming over the locks like cascades, and there were natural springs in every direction.

We now approached the town of Han-Tcheou; first we



THE TOWN OF HAN-TCHEOU.

came to the cemetery and its monuments, then to isolated newly-built houses, and the inhabitants ran towards us as fast as they could put their legs to the ground. They went into fits of laughter at us, especially the women. I had noticed ever since the outset of our journey that the latter were more prone to derision than the men.

We entered the town by the southern gate, which, as usual, was surrounded by a wall of its own, forming a half-circle and joining on to the principal wall. Between the two stood several temples. A quantity of trees, principally poplars, grew in all the streets and lanes, and gave the town the appearance of being situated in the midst of a park.

Having refused the quarters allotted to us, Sosnowsky sent to look for others, a proof that we were to remain some time in this beautiful city. Whilst awaiting the result, I sat down in the courtyard with Matoussowsky, and only then chanced to hear that all along the route from Lan-Tcheou, we had been preceded by three mandarins with orders to provide for our board and lodging.

I now made their acquaintance; the first, Tcheou, a mandarin wearing a general's button, was about forty years of age and a very pleasant man; the second, Pinn, was an ugly young man, but exceedingly nice; and the third, Ho by name, was sunburnt, reserved, and silent.

Quarters were offered us in the temple of Fan-Tching-Miao, situated near the eastern gate, and at a considerable distance from the spot where we then were. We proceeded to them on foot, followed by our escort, through grassgrown streets and empty squares, and found the aforementioned

temple very inferior to the quarters previously allotted to us.

Very shortly after our arrival I went into the town with two police agents, and getting to the top of the wall, turned my steps in a southerly direction. Before me the snow-capped chain of the Nan-Schan mountains was faintly indicated on the distant horizon; the panorama of the town was spread out at my feet, with its groups of houses, ponds covered with reeds, temples remarkable for their size, and gardens of poplars, yews, elms, and other trees. Tan-ta, a four-storied and very ancient wooden pagoda, towered over the houses; also a stone monument shaped like a vase; for what it was intended I could not ascertain. I could perfectly discern the crowd stationed in the courtyard where our quarters were fixed.

Amongst the edifices worthy of note, I remarked five or six temples, and especially one upon an island in a pond, and a club in the street leading to the southern gate. When we left the wall I made for this gate, and as it was late, I begged my guide to choose the shortest road home. Taking a cross road, we plunged into a reedy path, between two ponds which had lapsed into evil-smelling and unwholesome marshes. An inquisitive crowd still lingered at the door of the temple, endeavouring through the half-open gate to see what was going on inside.

July 25th. A beautiful morning. I spent it within the temple, arranging my herbarium and stuffing two birds I had killed over night (*Saxicola leucomela*, and *S. Morio*). During the day the heat was so excessive that were it not

that I should have regretted learning nothing about this town, which we were the first to visit, I should have preferred to stay and repose in the shade instead of going forth to get roasted in the sun. An eager and impatient crowd awaited me, and did not appear to grudge the hours spent in such a temperature. I remained a quarter of an hour on the terrace, letting the Chinese gaze upon me. My slightest movement was attentively followed, and they interchanged all kinds of remarks upon my appearance. For my part, I was struck by their poverty and unhealthiness. I left the terrace accompanied by the two agents, whose sole garments consisted of a pair of shoes and enormously wide pantaloons. One of them at once vanished, leaving me to his old and nearly blind colleague, who did not, however, feel the want of his sight. In his good whip he possessed the only qualification necessary to an excellent guide through the streets. He used his weapon with much skill, and kept the crowd at a distance; but the overwhelming heat was too much for the poor old man, and he was becoming visibly weaker, when a young man of about twenty made his way by sheer force through the crowd and came towards us. He was nearly as naked as the old man, and thus his well-developed biceps and herculean chest were exposed. He turned out to be the agent's son, and had come to replace his father. After bending the knee to me in greeting, he took the whip and sent the old man to rest. We came to a terrace on the edge of a pond, where I undid my camp-stool and planted my parasol, intending to draw. The Chinese, anticipating my intention, each endeavoured to get the best

place, but the boy drove them pitilessly away. They all seemed to have the utmost dread of the young agent, and, at last, seldom ventured near me.

Whether from a sense of duty, or from a need of perpetual motion, the young man never took an instant's repose. He struck right and left without mercy, quite needlessly, and never noticing whether he prevented my working or not. I endeavoured to quiet him, but the instant after he would throw himself like a tiger upon his compatriots, who grumbled and got angry, but obeyed. I quite expected the crowd to lose patience and to turn upon me, as being the chief cause of the blows, but nothing untoward occurred. Our departure from Han-Tcheou was fixed for the next morning.

July 27th. A sudden transition from the park-like town to a sandy and barren country devoid of all vegetation, and the dry and shifting sand so burning that we could not even touch it with our fingers. Lizards lay gasping for breath, though usually fond of heat. Fortunately this desert track was not of any great extent, and we soon entered a zone of flowery meadows, but met very few travellers. A mandarin was going the way we were, called by the duties of his profession to Sou-Tcheou, and travelling with only one servant and a little dog.

We went twenty-five versts (nearly seventeen miles) before reaching any village, and then halted in a little shop whilst water was boiled for our tea. I may here remark that however poor and small a hamlet may be, a little shop is always to be found where the inhabitants can procure all

articles of daily necessity; and another peculiarity is that there always turn out to be a great many more inhabitants than one would at first suppose. This was what we now found. Whilst we waited for the water at least ten customers came into the shop. They were nearly naked, very dirty and ragged, and quite unceremonious. One came in pretending not to have seen us, and, without saying a word, gave a cup with a few small coins to the shopkeeper, who, equally in silence, put the money in the till, filled the cup with oil, and gave it back to the individual. The purchaser, who had really only come to look at us, did not at all hurry himself about leaving; and the shopkeeper, who failed to see things in this light, had to order him out, making signs to him to show more respect. After his departure three soldiers came, and tried to seat themselves on the same bench with us, but were at once sent about their business.

We travelled another twenty miles over a fine grassy country, nicely wooded, well supplied with water and gardens amidst the now deserted villages. At night we reached the village of Scha-He, and were put up in a temple boasting of a very narrow court and very small rooms. During the night a fire broke out in the room next ours. Luckily every one was not asleep. We succeeded in getting the flames under, and were thus spared the sight of a Chinese conflagration. The Chinese seem to behave very courageously on such occasions. The rare occurrence of fires in China may perhaps be ascribed to the sober habits of the people. I have already mentioned that

opium-smokers do not lose their reasoning faculties like drunkards.

July 28th. To-day's stage is fifty versts. Great heat. The green waters of one of the irrigating canals furnished us with a bath, and we felt cooler for some hours afterwards, although the temperature of the water was 13° Reaumur. We dined at the village of Fou-I-Tcheng. Sosnowsky, who had gone on far in front of us, had left orders that we were to make haste, as we were to get over another forty *li*. We therefore went on as fast as we could, without waiting to rest. The road passed through meadows broken up by small lakes and marshes, evidently the home of snipe, although they were in hiding. Our colleagues must have had a shot at them, and this idea was afterwards verified by four birds sent me from the chief.

We met any number of coolies carrying weights on poles. This name is derived from two Chinese words—"*hou*," to hire, and "*li*," strength. The word "*hou-li*," means "for hire," or "for trouble;" that is, "payment for the carriage." Contrary to the practice of the porters in Central and Eastern China, these we now met never sang in cadence when carrying their burdens. It distressed me to look at these living machines, thanks to whom everything, from articles of necessity to those of luxury, were spread over the whole empire, a weary employment under a burning sun.

The sands now looked like islands in the midst of a beautiful plain watered by the Hei-Ho River, and covered with villages. The nature of the soil varied continually, zones of sand and earth constantly succeeding each other.

We travelled on, tired, exhausted, scorched by the sun, and exchanging a few words from time to time.

"Transparent" (the Chinese boy) "has cheated us," said the Cossack.

"Has he gone off?"

"No; but he now wishes to return to his native land. At first he longed to go to Russia, and, having no home, announced that he should follow us whether we allowed him to or not. Now he wants to be off, as his village is only ten *li* from where we are now."

"Well, let him go; we cannot force him to remain, but I am sorry, as we have got accustomed to him."

We had before come across the same thing. It was not difficult to see why he had joined us. With us Transparent led an easy existence: he was never bullied, and he had no hard work to do; he had plenty to eat, and was not even obliged to walk, as I allowed him to ride my second horse. Having said farewell, he saluted us each three times, and then started off on foot. A little money was given him, although it could scarcely be of much use to him, for there was nothing he could buy on the road. I could not but reflect on his sad prospects. He would probably go to some relation with a numerous family, who would not at all appreciate having to provide for an extra mouth; and, even if he did not send him off, his existence would be none the less wretched. I watched him out of sight, and soon he disappeared across the steppes.

We entered the town of Koou-Taï-Siañ by moonlight, and the Chinese sent out with lanterns to meet us passed on

without seeing us till we stopped them to ask our way. A temple gave us shelter. Our colleagues were already settled down, and had had a good supper without thinking of us; so we had two hours to wait before we could get anything.

July 29th. All I can say about Koou-Tai-Sian is that it seemed to be a peaceable town, and to have escaped the general devastation. Our road was varied by canals and small marshes, and we saw several herons wandering about their banks. The Chinese in these districts were almost all afflicted with goitres, and many had ulcers on their heads, necks, and faces.

We met a poor countryman taking a load of apples to the town. The soldiers of our escort accosted him, intending to "buy some without money," and I with great difficulty prevented this outrage. We spent the night at Heï-Tchan, but the heat and the high wind rendered sleep impossible.

July 30th. Just as we were about to start, "Transparent" again appeared on the scene, to our great satisfaction. He told us that he had found no survivor of his family in his native village, and that not knowing where he could live, he had now quite made up his mind to follow us to Russia. The Cossack Smokotnine agreed to take him as an apprentice, and in this way his future was provided for.

We still journeyed along a valley watered by the Hei-Ho River, with a good many lakes and marshes scattered about and abounding with game. Matoussowsky stopped at a ruined old temple to take the plan of it, and I took advantage of this to go and have a look at a high tower, serving as a post of observation. It was not easy to reach the top,

for the earthen staircase was worn away, but the soldiers on guard helped me up. There we came on two miserable chambers; the one was light and possessed a stove and a kang, but the other was nearly dark. The kang was covered with a felt full of holes, and had there not been a small lamp for opium-smoking, we should have seen absolutely nothing. Opium, that national scourge, had penetrated even here. This post was constantly occupied by four soldiers, who were relieved every five days. It would be difficult to exist there longer, for life in the midst of the desert might well be considered banishment. The Hei-Ho now took a bend to the north-east, and we entered a region of shifting sands, the plain becoming most desolate. In the midst of this dreary country was the village of Schi-Ho, seeming absolutely forgotten. Ten huts stood on either side of the road, without a tree or the smallest bush near them; nevertheless men spent their lives on this forsaken spot without aspirations or anxieties. Such was the arid appearance of everything around us, that I was almost surprised when a well was found. The water was somewhat salt, but not sufficiently so to hinder our making some tea to quench our thirst. Soon afterwards we again mounted our horses and proceeded to roast ourselves alive in the sun; one gets accustomed to everything. I tried various garments, and found that a linen suit and cap of the same material was the best adapted for the hot season in the steppes. Leather shoes were quite worthless. The inhabitants wore cotton shoes and plaited twine slippers.

I saw the *Podoces Hendersoni* for the first time, a bird

peculiar to the steppes. It runs very rapidly along the rocks, often hiding behind a thorny shrub called *Lycium rutheniacum*, with purple berries, used as a dye by the Chinese.

July 31*st*. A dreary country. Again any amount of ruins and an outpost of ten men, relieved every ten days. They were provided with eatables, but had to fetch water from a distance of nearly seven miles. We dined in a private house not far from the town of Sou-Tcheou, the mandarin to whom it belonged having come to greet us during the evening. The interview was very comic, for as usual we could not understand each other, and this mandarin spoke a peculiar dialect which even our servants could scarcely understand.

August 1*st*. Stage of twenty versts (nearly thirty miles) to the town of Sou-Tcheou, properly speaking the last large town in China. The neighbourhood is well cultivated and watered by rivulets. Every five versts we came to a military camp, where about fifteen soldiers met and accompanied us to the next camp, and so on.

Near the suburbs of the town whole villages might be seen in ruins. Absolutely nothing was left standing; everywhere lay heaps of stones, fragments of houses, temples, and broken statues of idols. The only monuments that had escaped destruction were the tombs built after the war in 1872, in memory of the wretched inhabitants exterminated during the siege of the town. The temple above the entrance gate was equally in ruins, and the saddest spectacle greeted us inside the walls: everything was razed to



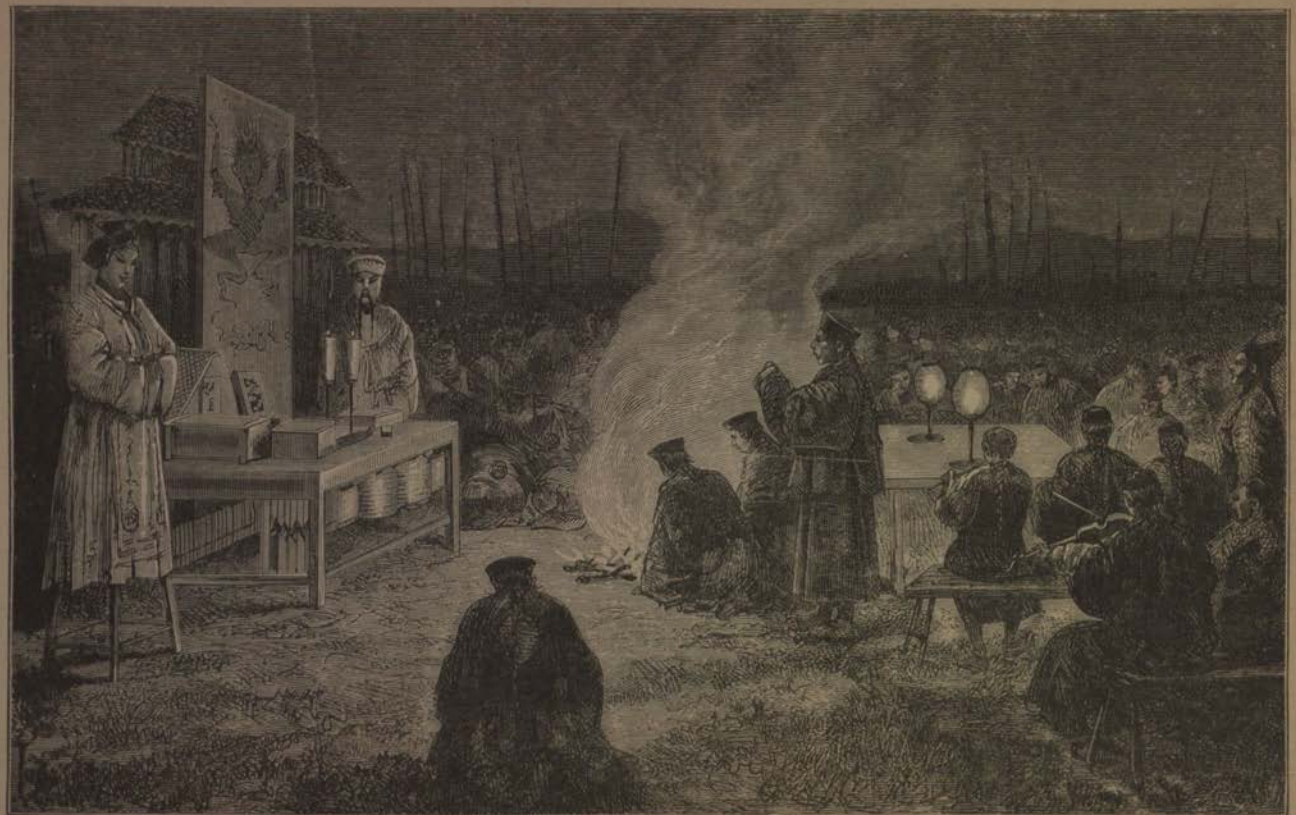
RUINS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SOU-TCHEOU.



RUINS OF SOU-TCHEOU.

the ground; silence and death reigned where the town of Sou-Tcheou had once stood. It was easy to imagine what had happened when the Mussulmans took possession of the town, and were subsequently ousted by the Chinese. Both are credited with the same custom of putting every creature to the sword, regardless of age or sex. I should be curious to find out the reason of this war, for whilst the Mussulmans were held in some districts as rebels, punished with death, or detained in prison, in others they lived quite peaceably with the Chinese, holding official posts, and having commercial dealings, and they had their own temples and clubs.

Such was the outer town (*vaï-tchenn*); the inner town (*li-tchenn*) had suffered too, but did not appear quite so desolate. There were a great many shops in the principal street, and the inhabitants mustered in considerable numbers. Whilst Sosnowsky received a mandarin wearing the blue button, I went about my occupations, working to the sound of neighbouring music. A funeral service was taking place, but far from being sad, the music might have enlivened the dullest of men. I could not resist going to see the ceremony. A numerous public, leaving the care of processions and psalmody to the clergy, laughed, talked, and smoked as if nothing were taking place. The temple was very poor, the priests themselves looking miserable, and presenting a striking contrast to the joyous crowd. The disposition of these people gave food for reflection, but I could not determine whether they were really gay and frivolous or merely indifferent. I was immediately surrounded, but they did



FUNERAL SERVICE.

not prevent my listening to the music. I soon distinguished a violin in the orchestra, played by a true artist, and a strong voice singing an air similar to those we had heard the year before in Mongolia. A violin accompanied the voice, with a rather good imitation of a Chinese woman's voice; and this duet was pleasant to the ear despite the clarionets, whistles, and other instruments; but as I said before, this music was ill-suited to funeral obsequies. We spent two days in the town, the weather remaining unsettled and cold, especially during the night. Some of the mandarins in the town sent presents to our chief, who took them without offering any sort of return, although we still had a good many samples of the Kiachta merchandise. He did not even call upon them, and I was ashamed and angry that he should accept presents from people so poor and wretched as the inhabitants of this district.

Before starting we were told that it was impossible to procure mules and carriages without paying for them. An inexperienced man would have hired them at once; the experienced man got into a rage, shouting that he would not stir till they had been supplied. Everything was soon found, except saddle-horses, but we were given a carriage instead.

August 4th. To the sound of trumpets, and accompanied by a troop of soldiers, we now left Sou-Tcheou. We had to travel twenty miles to Tzia-Youï-Gouan. A mandarin came out to meet us on horseback, preceded by a servant also on horseback, and carrying an umbrella or parasol of a most peculiar shape, bordered with a fringe to denote his rank. Another servant, who had started before his master, had

already joined us. On dismounting he bent the knee and offered us his master's card on red paper.

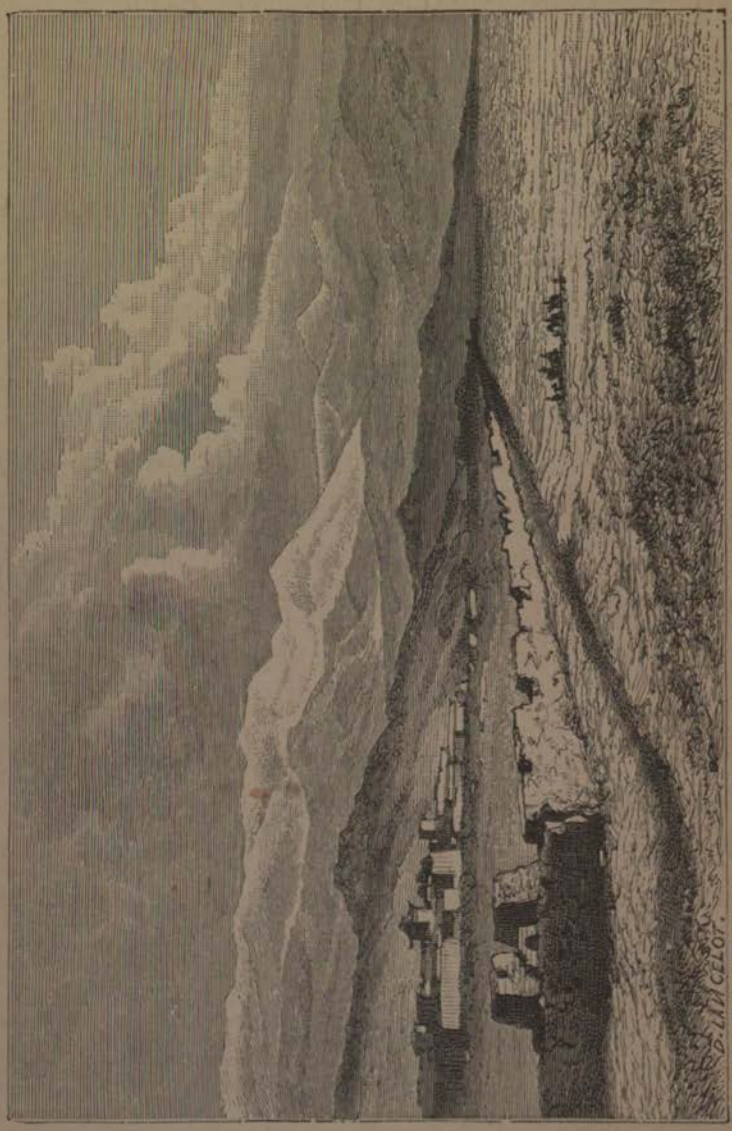
The mandarin when he arrived also dismounted to greet us, but was requested to remount. He then accompanied us into the little town of Tzia-Youï-Gouan. Although supposed to be fortified, it had by no means a military appearance. There were no cannon or soldiers to be seen; the streets were narrow, the houses small, and the people squalid and dirty. Some laughed at us, whilst others on the contrary showed us the way with the utmost respect.

When we reached our destination we found Sosnowsky seated beside the principal mandarin of the place, both absolutely silent, for our chief having always had two interpreters at his disposal, had never learnt a word of Chinese. He was quite thankful to see us, and said they had been sitting in this way for an hour and a half. The interpreters had fallen behind us, so we had to make the best of the situation.

I put some questions to the mandarin, and learnt that he had lived nine years in the town. He complained of the poverty of the country, and of his monotonous existence, telling us how tired he was of it. He asserted that there were 50,000 inhabitants, but I should doubt the fact. He was not sure about the strength of the garrison. This mandarin, already well advanced in years, was considerably occupied about his dress. Attired in satin, he had two squares of a different material on his breast, bordered with gold, and braided to represent storks. Each time he was spoken to he half rose from his seat.

After dinner I went to see the so-called fortress of Tzia-

Youï-Gouan, and was accompanied by a soldier and a small crowd of enquirers.



END OF THE GREAT WALL.

I had been astonished by the indifference shown at the sight of a stranger, as we were the first to visit this town;

but I subsequently heard that orders had been given not to annoy us.

There were three towers in the midst of the town; the central tower was particularly noticeable for its doors and latticed windows. The latter from a distance seemed made of wire. The tower was hexagonal and three-storied, and dominated the lifeless and dreary neighbourhood. The soil was greyish yellow and devoid of vegetation, with not a tree or stream to be seen.

I will only mention the Nan-Schan or Lan-Schan Mountains to the south-west, their summits covered with everlasting snow.

Later on I went towards the northern gate, opposite the one by which we had entered. We found it locked, but the porter hastened to open it for us, and when we had gone out he at once shut it again. This was a useless rule, for such a simple padlock could not avail much. It was only an ancient custom. The Great Wall, after circling round the town, stretched out towards the Nan-Schan chain, and ended at the river Si-Ho. Had time permitted it would have been interesting to visit this point, ten miles distant. I re-entered the town by the same gate, again carefully locked by the porter, who seemed to think he was performing a most important function.

CHAPTER VI.

Mongolia—The Desert, Whirlwinds and Mirage—Town of Añ-Si-Tcheou—Great Desert of Gobi—Wells—Oasis—Forced March—Discontent of the Chinese—Oasis of Khami and its three Towns—Ruins—General Tchan—Mohammedans—Palaces of the Princes of Khami—Temples and Minarets—The Mollah Yousoup Ahoun—Mohammedan Cemetery—Portrait of General Tchan.

August 5th. Escorted by three hundred soldiers, cavalry and infantry; and with trumpets blowing, we now left China proper to enter Mongolia, which we had crosssd the year before.

Eight days' journey separated us from Añ-Si, the last town on the southernmost limit of the desert of Gobi, but we might well have imagined ourselves already in the desert; it would be almost impossible to conceive a more desolate and dreary country than the one we were in.

Our tolerably large caravan presented a more or less martial appearance, as the soldiers were all armed with pikes, and the few travellers we met looked upon us with ill-disguised fear.

We lunched in the ruins of a camp, inhabited, nevertheless, by soldiers. Everything in it was poor and dirty, and covered with dust blown up by the violent wind which had raged ever since morning. We stopped to spend the night in the village of Houï-Houï-Fou (this name means "Mohammedan

village"). It was a veritable oasis, situated in a mountain gorge, shaded by venerable limes, and watered by a limpid stream. The sight of a village gave rest to the eye and real enjoyment after our day's journey across the desert.

August 6th. The foot soldiers now returned to Tzia-Youï-Gouañ, whereas the cavalry was to go on with us to Añ-Si.

There was nothing particularly noteworthy. The scenery was more varied; the road went over ground considerably permeated by salt, and from time to time we came upon little meadows, where the traveller could rest his horse. We spent the night at the little village of Tchi-Tzinn-Pou, where apartments were prepared for us in the official buildings. The caretaker or tenant, a nice old man, had adorned himself in our honour with a straw hat trimmed with red *pompons*. During dinner he tried to talk to us, and gave us to understand that he had accompanied our *man*, the Cossack, Pawlow, as far as Añ-Si. He probably expected a gratuity, and did in fact receive our thanks.

August 7th. The same old man, during breakfast, again repeated that he had accompanied Pao-lo-we; so we begged our Cossack, who was also the treasurer, to give him 1,000 sapeques. The poor old man was quite delighted, as he very likely had given up all hopes of receiving anything.

Just as we were starting, a little local mandarin came to see us off. Along the walls, outside the town, I for the first time noticed a whole row of mounds exactly alike. I turned to the mandarin for information, and found that these were tombs. On looking down the holes in the ground one could perceive the coffins. I had not seen tombs like these any-

where in China. Perhaps this way of putting the coffin on the ground, with only a slight layer of clay upon it, was merely temporary, whilst the corpse awaited removal to what had once been its native land; or it may have been permanent burial, which the Chinese like to delay as long as possible, even as long as two or three years.

The country was full of varied and striking contrasts. On our left, the desert and a chain of barren mountains; on our right, villages shaded by lime and yew-trees; fields and a meadow watered by the Ta-Ho River, wheat in sheaves or still uncut. These contrasts succeeded each other like a dream. The oases appeared and disappeared like visions. Farther on a ruined village, not a living soul, not a hut, nothing but death and destruction; on the ground heaps of bricks and fragments of the statues of idols. This was all that remained of a temple.

On leaving this village I was surprised to find some children playing in the sand. On seeing us they took to flight, probably to communicate the news to their parents, as two Chinese jumped out of a window shortly afterwards, and proceeded to gaze on us with mingled fear and curiosity. They were the only inhabitants we saw, but there were probably others on the oasis. I wondered why these had established themselves in this corner of the earth. They had even decorated their poor huts with frescoes. I threw them a roll of sapeques. "*Do-sie, do-sie!*" (many thanks), said one of them, but he did not venture to run and pick it up till I had passed on.

In this desert we often met with whirlwinds and mirages.

The first got up in several places at once, like columns of smoke, and whirled across the desert. One of these whirlwinds was most interesting. A pillar of sand lifted into the air took the shape of a barrel or a reversed cone, the point touching the earth and the base raised towards the sky in a slightly inclined position, with a long nucleus coming out of its midst like the pistil of a flower.

The deceitful mirage represented lakes dotted over with islands, marshes covered with reeds, or a sea with promontories.

At the gate of Youï-Myñ-Siañ, we were received by a mandarin wearing the copper button, and by a few soldiers. The street we went through was full of people. I took a short walk accompanied by most of the inhabitants, who were, however, very well-behaved; the first who permitted himself the liberty of laughing out loud was at once called to order. The town of Youï-Myñ-Siañ had escaped the disasters of war; how I know not. Its streets were narrow, and the chimneys were on the flat roofs of the little clay houses, unlike the usual Chinese custom.

During the evening the local mandarin called and apologized for not receiving us as he could have wished, the country being poor and devastated. These were only polite phrases, as he knew perfectly well that he had given us a reception far beyond our expectations.

August 8th. The mandarins who had accompanied us from Sou-Tcheou came to bid us farewell, and custom might have led them to expect some small recognition of their good offices. But there was no sign of anything of the sort.

We started after breakfast, advancing but slowly, and hindered by a strong wind. We were joined by a mandarin in blue spectacles, accompanied by two servants, but he followed us without speaking, as he knew beforehand that all conversation was impossible. A short time afterwards another mandarin came to meet us, and presented his card, but seeing that he could not make himself understood, started off again at a gallop. He was an envoy from the military camp near the village of San-Dao-Ho, where we made our entry in the midst of a double row of soldiers carrying banners.

The commandant of the camp, with the general's button, came to meet us, and invited us to dinner. He might have been twenty-five or thirty years of age, and wore yellow, a sign of distinguished service. His appearance was dignified, his manner extremely polite and agreeable, and he won our hearts at first sight.

The dinner took place in a small room; the table, placed between two *kangs*, took up all the available space, and the inferior officers, who had come as spectators, tried to squeeze themselves into the corners. After dinner pipes, cushions, and all the indispensable apparatus for smoking opium were brought.

The General invited us to smoke the "great tobacco" (*da-yan*) as he called opium. I smoked two pipes of it, much to the delight of the Chinese. I even enjoyed the first pipe, and recalled the fact that Tzo had stated that in his native province neither smokers nor opium existed. He constantly invited us to mention a single spot in it where the poppy

was cultivated, or where opium was smoked. But according to reports on inland commerce in China, the province of Kan-Sou exports opium to the other parts of the empire, and this opium would appear to be the best and the most costly, next to that grown in India.

The young general suffered from his eyes, and having been apprized of the presence of a doctor among the members of the expedition, consulted me on the subject. I was unfortunately unable to cure him, but gave him what advice I could.

August 9th. Nothing of note. If the mornings were cold, the heat in the middle of the day was overpowering. After fording a river we let our horses quench their thirst. Mine was so delighted with the cold water that I had the greatest difficulty in preventing his lying down and taking a bath.

At night we arrived exceedingly hungry at Siao-Van-Pou. The chief did not permit us to sit down to table until his friends the photographer and the interpreter had arrived, although when Matoussowsky and I were late, no one troubled about our absence.

August 11th. From a distance the town of Añ-Si-Tcheou looked like a straight line in the distance with towers at either end. The mirage gave it the effect of being in the middle of a lake whence emerged the walls reflected on its surface.

A detachment of soldiers commanded by a mounted mandarin came to meet us. The governor of the town had sent us his card, and after a mutual exchange of politeness we entered the town together.

We knew of course that Aũ-Si had suffered from the war, but the destruction we now beheld surpassed anything I could have imagined. Nothing remained of this big town but a heap of stones, fragments of walls, and ruined temples. In the midst of this vast site a few aged inhabitants had built huts; but with this slight exception, nothing was to be seen but an abundance of grass.

Our modest quarters consisted of two rooms, one light and the other dark, for they were only lit by the door. All the furniture it contained was a stove and a *kang* covered with white felt, impregnated with a most disagreeable odour. We asked for a table and a bench, which were brought, and when we had settled down we sent for the mandarins, Tchou and Pinn, to give us their opinions as to what preparations we should make for our journey across the steppes.

They begged us to leave everything to them, as they undertook to provide tents and provisions for everyone. "Do not be the least anxious," they said, "we shall find water and forage for the beasts wherever we go, and the journey will be accomplished without any trouble.

I did not doubt their good faith, but thought with Matoussowsky that it would be well to provide against any emergency, and therefore gave our Cossack orders to purchase provisions for our own special escort, comprising the Cossack and three Chinese in addition to our two selves.

It was a ten days' journey between Aũ-Si and Khami. Two-hundred and fifty rolls were ordered and a sheep bought. To preserve the meat we adopted the process long used in that country. Bits of fresh meat were passed through boil-

ing salted water, and then left to dry for two or three days. The meat thus prepared did not require to be hermetically sealed even in the greatest heat, and we had already put this to the proof.

These precautions taken, I determined on visiting the town, uninteresting though it was at this time, and absolutely unknown to Europeans, some geographers even disputing its existence.

We spent two days in it, and found the inhabitants still mustered in considerable numbers. The town will certainly disappear sooner or later in the sand constantly blown from the desert. In the interior the northern side presented great heaps of sand, forming regular hills, and every inhabitant who was the least well off tried to protect his little house by a rampart of earth. Their mode of constructing these ramparts is most simple. A square is marked out with four posts, between which planks are adjusted and form a species of box; this is then filled with earth and pressed down with their feet or with a big stone until it is well solidified. Then a fresh layer of earth is added, and so on. Very probably the Great Wall was built in this fashion. The evening before our departure we made the acquaintance of a worthy old man called Tchann, who was to be our future purveyor, and to start the night before we did, with the kitchen and eatables. He had often travelled across the Gobi, and now promised to see to everything that was necessary.

August 14*th*. Here we are, with nine days before us in the Great Desert, or the Desert of Gobi, bounded on the

north by the Tian-Schan Mountains. This vast country is absolutely uncultivated and uninhabited, with the exception of four oases. The land is principally rocky, and there are only occasional islands of sand. By rail we could have got from Añ-Si to Khami in twelve hours, and with our troïkas in two days at most. But caravans like these only proceed at a foot pace. In the neighbourhood of Añ-Si scanty grass grew in patches. Soon it disappeared altogether, and in the whole vast plain there was nothing but stones. The mirage had re-appeared, but so faintly that it required a strong imagination to be taken in by it.

We and our horses were covered by a thick layer of white dust as fine as flour. Not a plant, not an insect, not a single thing to vary the monotony. A white speck appeared on the horizon, and turned out to be the tent our cook, Tchann, had pitched near the ruins of a former post-house or station. He presented each of us with a cup of water, according to custom. It was cool but not very clear, and shortly afterwards we had dinner. Eating is a thing of secondary importance in the desert; one longs incessantly to drink, and the well was soon exhausted. The water brought for the tea was exceedingly muddy. A strong wind inflated our tent and blew out our candle, so we went early to bed. I was just falling to sleep when the tent was carried off by a gust of wind. We could only resign ourselves to spending the night under the stars, and I never shut my eyes. The whole camp was wrapped in silence, until later on I saw a lantern, which turned out to be in the hands of our victualler, Tchann, about to set off with his kitchen.

August 15th. We started early and met a caravan of camels encamped in a meadow near a sheet of water. At night we stopped at the Bei-Tan-Tzy well, where another caravan belonging to the Chinese Government was already established. More than ten blue tents were pitched at this spot; food was preparing at all the fires, and the partially naked Chinese wandered about eating vermicelli with their chopsticks. The horses and camels, numbering three hundred, held together, and grazed on the hard thorny bushes covering the land. I went to see the well, whence they were all drawing water. It was three feet four wide, and rather more than a foot deep. The spring was inexhaustible, and a wondrous benefit in the midst of the desert; but such was the uncleanliness of the Chinese, that they were in the habit of pouring back any water they or their animals had not used. One had really to be dying of thirst to bring oneself to drink. The caravan soon started, travelling by night to avoid the heat of the day. Tchann served our dinner—bacon *aux fines herbes*, eggs and bacon, boiled rice, vinegar and radishes. As may be gathered, the dinner was not very wholesome; and thinking our servants would come off still worse, I ordered the Cossack to make soup for himself, his colleague, and our three servants.

August 16th. The wells were the only points of interest in the desert. Near the ruins of a former halting-place we came upon a well of clear fresh water, tasting slightly of soda. Although it was in a deep pit, the horses guessed the presence of water, and went of their own accord to the edge of the pit. Later on we reached another well, the Da-

Tchuan-Tzy, where we hoped to spend the night, but our chief was travelling in a little carriage, and was some way behind us. We had, therefore, to wait and find out what we were to do. He was asleep, and no one dared to wake him. It was only after dinner that he ordered us to go on.

The sun having set, Matoussowsky could not pursue his occupations, and was much vexed. We came to a place where the road forked, and sent a soldier by the road to the right in search of a well, whilst we ourselves pursued the road to the left. Suddenly we heard a shot, and were at a loss to know whether it was an attack or merely a signal. One of our soldiers fired an answering shot, and then we heard the other soldier cry, "*Hao !*" (It is well), in the distance.

"Is there a spring over there?"

"*Mo-schui !*" (No water), he replied.

The chief's Cossack galopped towards us. "Have we missed seeing a well?"

"No; the chief has sent me on to prepare tea. I fancied you were at the well." He then added with a sigh, "I took an oath to the Czar to serve the State faithfully, and I must do so."

This was the only murmur he allowed to escape him during the whole of our journey. Not knowing what to do, or where to seek a well, we now halted, and every one prepared to rest. In the distance we heard the bells on the mules and the cries of their drivers, who were as tired as their beasts.

The whole caravan had now come up. Sosnowsky asked

the Cossack from his carriage whether tea was ready, and on hearing there was no water, indulged in generalizations on the stupidity of those who could not even find a well. The caravan started off again; we searched in vain for our horses, and were obliged to set off on foot. When we at length reached the well we found tea ready and our tents pitched; but as the water was sulphurous, it was impossible to swallow it without a considerable quantity of peppermint drops. At three in the morning we went to bed without eating, and without my having stuffed the two *Rodentia* of the *Jerboa* species that had been killed during the day.

Augst 17*th*. Our Cossack left early in the morning with two soldiers to look for the horses. They found them without their bridles; the articles I had left in the saddle-pockets were also missing—my note-book, my paint-box, the phial of spirits of wine into which I threw insects; all these things were lost. Meanwhile, the mandrians came to the chief to demonstrate to him the impossibility of doing stages like that of yesterday.

"There will be two wells on our road to-day," said they; "the first is fifteen versts (ten miles) from here; the other is sixty versts (forty miles). We must stop at the first, where there is even a sufficient quantity of grass for the beasts; but if we go on to the next we shall be too late, the beasts will be over-fatigued, and will be unable to advance."

"I will see later on," replied Sosnososky. "At present there is no use in discussing the matter."

I started convinced that we should stop at the first well, and that I should have time to do the work of yesterday—

take notes, class plants, and get some sketches of the Gobi; but Matoussowsky was of a contrary opinion.

"I have the honour to inform you that you will have the pleasure of travelling another forty-five versts (thirty miles) on horseback to the next well, although the Chinese assert that this oasis abounds in water and pasturage. The mandarins have even entreated the chief, and the drivers have implored mercy for their beasts, but they have been sent about their business." Matoussowsky became thoughtful while saying all this.

We therefore continued our journey under a scorching sun. The heat was of a peculiar kind; without weakening the body or causing perspiration, it was burning, and ones face and hands suffered most. Sometimes a cloud passed over the sun and produced a shadow, which at once brought the relief that a cold bath might produce. The mules could no longer drag the carriages; some were unharnessed and fastened behind.

Night had closed in when we perceived a light in the distance. A shot announced that we were not far from the station. The carriage with the food had remained far behind. Everybody was hungry, and the mandarins were by no means pleased. Our horses had eaten the bamboo mats covering the carriages, and the unhappy mules had no nourishment, as we never stopped at the little oasis.

August 18th. We succeeded in preparing a dinner at our own expense by utilizing our provisions. The Cossacks attached to the chief and the interpreter Andreïewsky were invited to our little feast. They assured us that they had

had nothing but some dried-up ham offered to them by the Chinese in the villages we had recently passed.

To be sure, Tchann had some fowls and two sheep, but never being allowed time to cook, he determined on giving one to the chief and the other to us. "Do what you like with it," he said, but we refused to accept it. Both mandarins and soldiers openly showed their discontent, and some behaved very rudely.

Sosnowsky having succeeded in killing a wild mule (*ye-lo-tzy*), I ran with some soldiers to skin the animal, as they wanted the flesh; but I was obliged to give up my intention, for it was very late, and the soldiers, after having each cut off a good piece, went away rejoicing. The soldiers showed the meat to their comrades, who at once saddled their horses and went off to get their share. According to promise, one of the soldiers brought me a piece of the meat, which was not bad to the taste, but very hard.

The road we had come over was entirely granitic, strewn with a very hard black stone with a metallic sound.

August 19th. The character of the desert now went through a complete change. We had to cross perpendicular granitic hills. Farther on we came to one of the natural halting-places in the Gobi, called Bei-Tzy-Tzy-Taï. This was a little meadow, watered by a stream forming quite a marsh.

None of the caravans crossing the Gobi pass this spot without stopping at it, and we now found a caravan of wheat there, going towards Khami. We stopped there an hour to give the mules a feed of grass. We saw nothing of note

during the rest of the day, unless it were the mirage. At night we encamped near a stream called Po-Tzy-Tziuan.

It was a beautiful evening, and everybody was in a good temper. I delighted the Chinese by playing their song of the "Twelve Flowers." The third mandarin, Ho, actually got out of his carriage to listen to the music. The other two were old friends. Although of high rank, these mandarins might have served as a model to many European officers in their affability towards their inferiors. To-day they expressed a desire to visit our Pekin (St. Petersburg). We asked them what they would like us to send them from Russia when we had the opportunity. After a long discussion, it turned out that our cloth was what tempted them most.

August 20th. Seventh day of our journey across the Gobi. I noticed some poplar stumps (*Populus diversifolia*), two birds, a crow and the hou-pou (*Shyrraptes parodoxus*), and two kinds of lizards. We also passed some dead camels. As soon as these animals are unable to follow their caravan, they are left to die in terrible suffering.

We stopped at a small oasis, where the well is called Ou-Toun-O-Tzy, and where another caravan of more than a hundred vehicles was already encamped. A little stream ran through the meadow; perhaps its fresh limpid water had caused the death of the camels we beheld lying in considerable numbers by the stream. Or had these poor creatures, parched with thirst, only dragged themselves thus far to die? Near the stream some withered elms stripped of their bark seemed to prove that there were other travellers

in the desert besides the Chinese, who are very fond of trees. Through the night we were, for the first time, nearly suffocated by the heat, and, to add to our discomfort, this well exhaled a strong smell of sulphur.

August 21st. Everybody was stirring long before sunrise, for we had to get over a stage of seventy versts (rather more than forty-six miles) before reaching the next well.

The Gobi again appeared like a boundless sea. It seemed as if we had barely travelled one verst (two-thirds of a mile). In the distance we had still the same snow-capped mountain before us. The Chinese could not tell me its name, but it seemed to me that it must belong to the Celestial chain. We saw it still more clearly to-day.

Pointing to a little hill that did not appear to be very far off, a Chinaman informed me that we should there spend the night; but it was only towards sunset that we could make out a shady, grassy valley, even boasting of some trees. A man must have crossed the desert to be able to understand the joy created by the sight of verdure. This oasis, watered by the Err-Goou, had the additional attraction of a small hut tenanted by two Chinese, father and son. I was going as fast as possible to see these inhabitants of the desert, when they came themselves to offer melons and water-melons. They sold them at 16 kopecks each. I inquired of these recluses whether they had come here of their own accord, or whether they had been sent. They answered me that they had come of their own free will, as they were permitted to cultivate the land without any tax. A dreadful existence.

I would have been sorry even to have spent a couple of days with them.

August 22nd. Before leaving I took a turn along the banks of the stream. Although tolerably wide, it was nearly hidden by wild briars, mint, and dodder. I counted sixteen dead camels on the banks. After journeying two hours we noticed a group of silver poplars on the hillside. Did we dream that we saw a wood in the midst of the desert? Everything teemed with life in this oasis. There were wheat-fields and gardens of melons, and a little hut tenanted by three Chinese. The eldest of them hastened to meet us. They offered us melons, which we paid for at the same rate as yesterday.

Whilst walking along the oasis I suddenly smelt something I knew to be a dead body. It proved to be a camel lying only a few steps from the hut. Far from incommoding the inhabitants, they even valued this possession, as it provided them with a large supply of meat, now hanging up to dry in the sun in long thin strips. It would moreover have been difficult for them to carry off and bury such a voluminous mass. Our worthy Cossack despised their indolence, but it was certainly not from choice that they ate the flesh of a dead animal.

At the top of the rocky mountain skirted by this oasis I saw the ruins of a Mussulman temple (*houmbar*), and at its base those of a Chinese temple, Err-Goou-Miao, a most singular conjunction; and I wondered by whom and at what period they could have been constructed. Those temples now represented two countries at war, and seemed

to ask each other why the two nations had gone in for mutual extermination, or what the result of the terrible effusion of blood had been, of which the desert of Gobi was itself the scene.

In the twilight I saw birds on the wing, a sure sign that a well was at hand; and, true enough, a little further on I perceived a grassy bank and two of our soldiers standing near their camels, pike in hand. I urged on my horse, and heard Matoussowsky, who was seated on the ruins of a house, call out, "Come, make haste!"

"What is the matter? Is there a fire anywhere?"

"There is no fire; but eat a slice of melon, and come on. The chief has seen fit to continue our march, for the water in this well does not please him, and no one knows when we shall come on another."

At first I thought he was joking, but was at last obliged to yield to ocular demonstration, not, however, before satisfying myself as to whether the water was really bad. The well was larger than any we had come upon in the Gobi, and was even surrounded by trees such as we had not hitherto seen. The water was cold and pure, and, although it smelt a little of sulphur, was tasteless; therefore the pretext was imaginary. We were nevertheless obliged to get on our horses and start off again. At the same instant our baggage-waggons came up, and the unsuspecting drivers made at once for the well, calling out cheerily to their mules, "Come on a bit; come on —only a few steps more." And the poor beasts summoned up all their energy to do these few steps, in anticipation of the subsequent rest. It gave us

the greatest pain to have to announce that we were not to stop. The men followed us with imprecations, for which they had good grounds.

I started off as fast as I could to avoid hearing and seeing the blows which descended on the poor beasts. We went on three or four versts (about two or three miles) before reaching the next well. The convoy caught us up a great deal later, only to find that the well was dried up.

August 23rd. We were to reach Khami to-day. After marching ten versts (rather more than six miles), we came upon the ruins of the village of Houan-Lou-Gan, and five versts further on upon those of the village of I-Ko-Schoou. The grass grew to a great height around these ruins, and came up to the horses' middles.

As usual, our chief had started off in front, and Matoussowsky and I were alone till a detachment of soldiers came up behind us; two of them preceded us as guides. Thus escorted we reached the courtyard of a house where a mandarin with the red button invited us to enter and eat. Our colleagues had already lunched. This lunch, sent from Khami, was plentiful, and served in very original dishes made of varnished skins, which might have been mistaken for wood. These came from Si-an-Fou, the ancient capital of China.

Another mandarin, wearing the blue button, was introduced to us as the civil governor of Khami. He had long served at Shanghai, where he had known many Europeans and adopted their manners. As to the General with the red button, I suspected him of being merely dressed up for

the occasion. My suspicions were increased when he himself informed me that he had accompanied our Cossack Pawlow from Khami to the next town, and that the Governor of Khami had bestowed 100 roubles (about £16) upon Pawlow.

During the afternoon we reached the Khami oasis, and, after fording a stream, passed a village and cemetery, both equally in ruins.

Everywhere the traces of the war were observable, but the ruins were already half buried in the sand. In the midst of the oasis was a sandy island about five versts in extent. The wind blew up the sand in such thick clouds that it was impossible to see through it. We escaped it by taking refuge in the old town of Khami, a town so utterly ruined that it was impossible to judge what it might have been before the war. Properly speaking, the new town was only an encampment of the Chinese army.

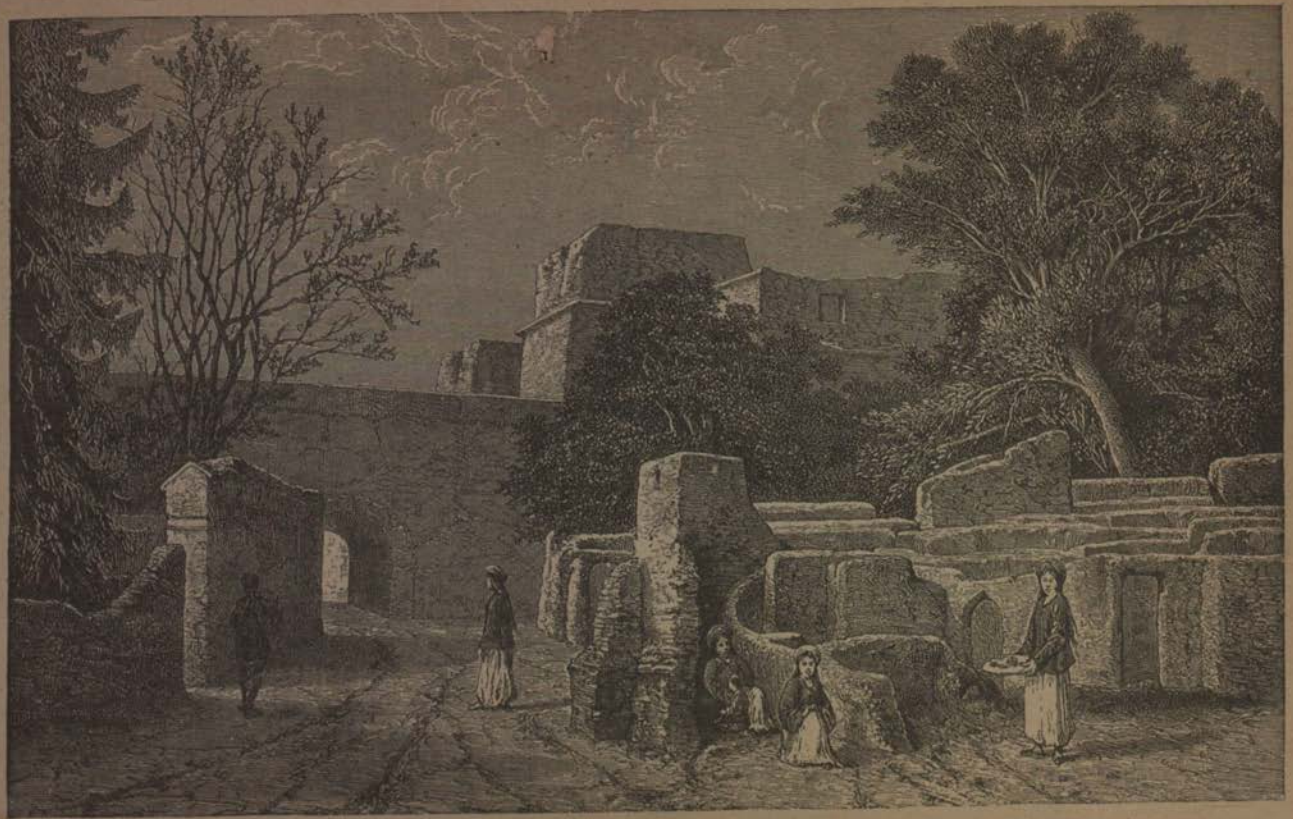
An officer awaited us, and invited us to enter a house, where we found the same civil official as in the morning and the military commandant's aide-de-camp. The mandarins of our advance guard were also there. All seated themselves at the table. The food was served in silver bowls, and not in porcelain cups, as in China. The furniture of the room was a mixture of European and Asiatic produce. There were Chinese candelabra with wax candles, knives, forks, and spoons. The dinner was abundant, without mentioning the Khami melons and water-melons, which are renowned throughout China, and equal to those forced under glass in Europe. The tea, following dinner, was served Russian

fashion, in a Toula samovar; and this surprise was a great pleasure to me.

Our quarters were in General Tchan's own house, an official wearing the two-eyed peacock's feathers. (There are only six of this rank in the whole of China.) Tchan was Tzo's intimate friend; he was supposed to be enormously strong and a very good shot. He sent us word that he would not venture to disturb us that day, but should expect us on the following. However, Sosnowsky saw fit to go off by himself that very evening to call upon the General. The rest of us spent it with the three mandarins who had been our travelling companions; and we made acquaintance with an Indian, named Houa-Li, attached to the Chinese army as instructor of musketry. He was a native of Bombay, spoke an English dialect, had kept a tobacco-shop in a Chinese town, and after losing all his money decided on becoming instructor. He was charmed to meet us, and all the more from the fact that he could not write. He begged us to compose a letter to his family, who had not heard from him for a long time, and offered to be my guide whilst we remained at Khami.

There is nothing much to be said about our visit next day to Tchan, except that he indicated that he was speaking of himself by touching his nose with his finger, instead of laying his hand on his breast as we did. The General was very polite although rather shy in manner, and took my fancy at once.

A week's stay at Khami enabled me thoroughly to explore the oasis. Situated about forty versts (about twenty-seven



INTERIOR OF THE TOWN OF KHAMI.

miles) from the southern branch of the Tiañ-Schan range, it is sheltered from the north winds, and the ground is tolerably fertile for the space of five square versts, and well watered by two big streams. It is almost all under cultivation. Wheat, millet, buckwheat, maize, melons, water-melons, pumpkins, vines, and fruit-trees grow in sufficient quantities for the needs of the inhabitants, and if the production has recently diminished it is that the population has also diminished, as far as one can judge by the numbers of ruined houses in the three towns of which the oasis can boast. These are all close to one another, but each has its separate wall. There are besides a few villages, hamlets, and farms or isolated cottages. The three towns are Houï-Tchen, the Mussulman town; Lao-Tchen, the old town, and Syn-Tchen, the new town. The latter, built after the war, presents nothing of note. The old town is inhabited by the garrison. But the Mohammedan town interested me more than the others: houses, temples, cemeteries, and inhabitants were all worth seeing, and I went there every day. There was no trace of the rich and luxurious town that had existed before the war, and in which, as an old man said, "Every one lived like a king." One now saw nothing but ruins and pieces of recently built walls and houses. The most striking characteristic of this town, particularly distinguishing it from the Chinese towns, was the absence of all shops. There was not even a trace of their existence in former times.

The Mohammedan inhabitants call themselves Tarantchas, or Hamyl-Louk; they speak a dialect greatly resembling

that of the Kirghiz, and our Cossacks, who knew the latter, could easily converse with the Tarantchas.

The inhabitants of the oasis were not numerous. I was astonished that even these had escaped the general massacre. The survivors were certainly reduced to the greatest misery, but it was not so obtrusive as in the Chinese towns. These Mohammedans were of a remarkable type. The women were much prettier than the Chinese, and not so shy; both men and women wore turbans like mitres or crowns embroidered with gold and silver.

All the houses were of unbaked brick, and built on a settled plan. The palace of the Khami princes, raised on an embankment near the only gate into the town, dominated all the other houses. The court of the palace was of considerable extent, and recalled the Chinese style. In this we dismounted, and went up two or three steps into the second court, where a part of the palace still remained, with its walls much injured. The roof was gone, and a heap of bricks remained. In the interior almost everything was destroyed; however, some rooms were well preserved, and as they were all alike, one could form some idea of this palace, formerly containing sixty rooms. It was in process of being rebuilt; several rooms were finished, and amongst others the reception-room.

A Chinese was busy decorating the cornices when I entered. I asked him if he would not like me to draw something for him. The painter and a few old people who had followed me into the room received the proposition with great delight, and gave me paint-brushes and paint, which,

to my regret, were not worth much. I painted a basket of flowers over one of the doors which, although but moderately good, was much admired. One of the old men told me they would take great care of it, and inform the prince that it was my handiwork.

At that time the prince inhabited quarters in the new town assigned to him by the Chinese Government. I fancied he was very likely under arrest, for when I went to call on him I was told that he was ill. It is possible that the Chinese did not wish us to meet?

If the hall in the palace was nothing remarkable, the view from the windows was splendid. Not only was the town visible, but the whole surrounding country: houses scattered about on the oasis, and in the distance the snow-capped peaks of the Tiañ-Schan. What a delightful existence might be led among the Oriental luxury of these carpets, divans, and silks! There was no one about to-day, and I went undisturbed through the rooms, of which some were still quite black from the smoke of the conflagration. I remarked a small square hole in one of the little courts, and was informed that it was the spot where the treasure and money belonging to the princes was deposited. When the Chinese took possession of the town everything was pillaged.

I next went into the big garden attached to the palace. It had none of the pretensions of Chinese gardens, and was merely an orchard. There were apple, walnut, apricot, and pear-trees, not to mention vines. Amongst other trees I particularly noticed silver poplars, yews, elms, and mulberries. This garden, like all the rest in the town, had



RUINS OF THE PALACE OF THE PRINCES OF KHAMI.

escaped destruction. It was the same with the Mahommedan temples, called *houmbar*, or *mest-tzit*. This last term seemed to apply more to minarets, or square towers built of unbaked bricks, neither painted nor whitewashed, some of which had not even a roof.

The actual temples (*houmbar*) had one or more courts paved with bricks, and galleries running round them adorned and supported by sculptured pillars. In the interior were also gaudily-painted colonnades, and the walls bore inscriptions from the Koran.

One peculiarity I remarked was the varied collection of animals' horns in the courts, hung on the lattice-work or roofs.

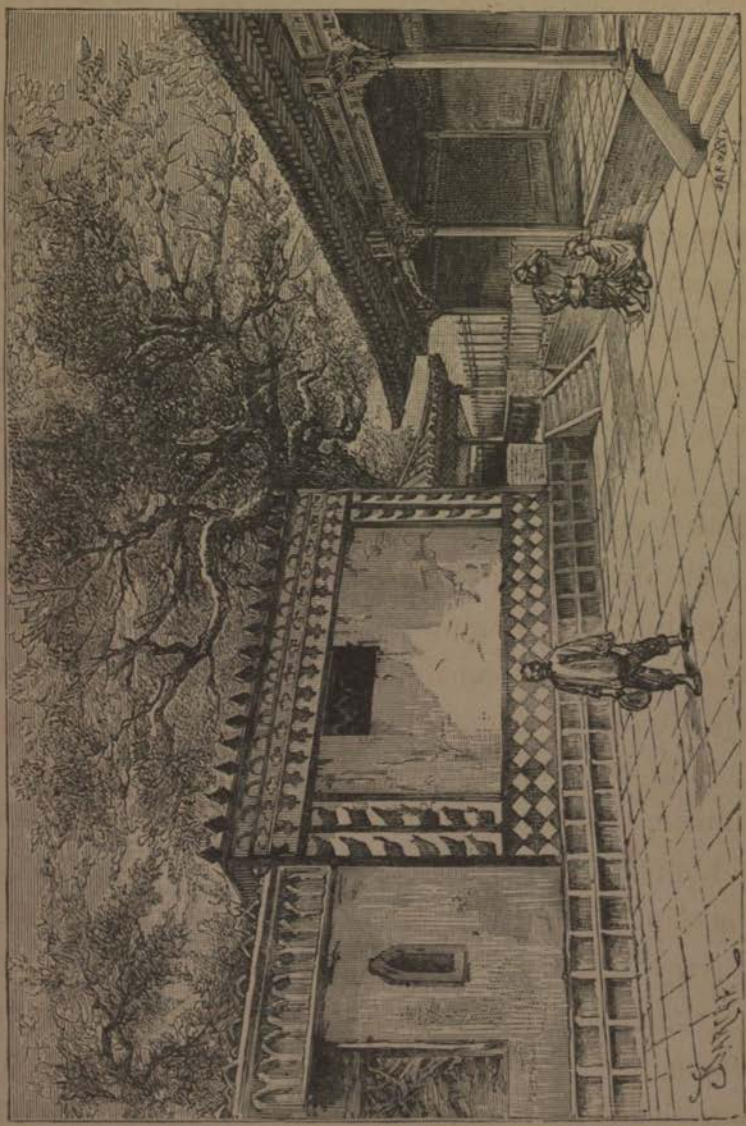
Those horns evidently had some meaning, unknown to me and probably to the priests. I should add that they were not greatly prized, as I was allowed to take any I liked.

Next day I made acquaintance with the principal mollah, a very intelligent man, intellectual, hospitable, and agreeable. Unfortunately it was not easy for us to converse either in Chinese, or aided by Houa-Li, the Indian, who knew very little English.

Yousoup Ahoun was a man of sixty, above middle height, of a very agreeable countenance and regular features. Every time that I went into the Mussulman town I called upon him, and other aged people assisted at our interviews. He questioned me a great deal about Russia, its merchants and produce, and expressed a great wish to see how the Russians made cloth, steel, braided trimmings, &c.

My possessions in indiarubber interested him greatly, and

when I made him a present of my cushion and bottle his delight was quite childlike.



MOHAMMEDAN TEMPLE AT KHAMI.

Yousoup opened a religious discussion, but laughed heartily when I spoke of "God the Father" and "God the Son."

He asked me several questions about the Emperor, whose name he knew, and about the "biggest town in Russia," its learning, its tribunals, &c., meanwhile giving me fruit, and tea scented with jasmine. He even invited me once to dinner, and his daughter-in-law and grand-daughter were present at the meal.

As a rule the women at Khami are at liberty to go about, which was most unusual among Mohammedans.

I obtained permission to take portraits of Yousoup and his family.

On the day fixed I found them all in gala attire, the women in satin and rich turbans. Yousoup himself had on a blue satin robe and had donned a white turban, and they all wore goloshes over their shoes, although it was a warm, dry day.

I thanked them much for having sat to me, but Yousoup expressed much gratitude for the honour I had bestowed on him, as well as for the little presents made to the ladies. He joined his hands and pressed them to his breast. As a general rule the inhabitants of Khami were very polite and obliging. I do not know if they were the same before the war, when the town was more populous.

I must add a few words about the Mussulman cemetery adjoining the town, a great part of which was occupied by vaults. Beside this public burying-ground was the sepulchre of the Khami princes, a big monument, surmounted by a dome. The façade of this princely vault was turned to the east and shaped like a shield. In the interior were several coffins placed on the ground and entirely covered with plaster.

PORTRAIT OF GENERAL TCHAN.

I did two portraits of the General Tchan, one for himself and the other for my own benefit. It was one way of keeping up the reputation of the expedition, which had been almost ruined by the shipwreck at Loun-Tan.

When I asked him why he was so anxious to have his portrait drawn, as he had already been photographed, he answered that "Photography was so common that it abounded everywhere, but that very few drawings were to be had." Everyone thought his likeness very successful (*sian de heñ*), and the general ordered it to be framed and glazed. There was no glass or frame in the place, but Tchan was not so easily beaten, and ordered a mirror to be taken down and the tinfoil scraped off.

All the officers were invited to go and see "the General Tchan drawn," after which they all came to beg me to take their portraits.

Meantime Sosnowsky was composing a letter to Tzo. Our chief had considered the compact to furnish bread in the light of a private transaction, but the mischievous Tzo had officially informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a letter was sent from Pekin to Khami, in which the fulfilment of the promise was demanded. We had therefore to concoct an answer, which would have been simple enough with competent interpreters, but with Siui and Andreïewsky there seemed insurmountable difficulties about the whole thing.

Andreïewsky, when asked by telegram if he would take part in the expedition as interpreter, had accepted without knowing a word of Chinese, thinking that he would only be the second or third interpreter. As to Siui, "the represen-

tative of a solid commercial house," he had been asked if he would accept so much by the month to go with us? He proved willing, and the bargain was struck.

How, then, was the chief's letter to be translated into Chinese? One of the interpreters did not know Russian,



THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF KHAMI.

and the other knew no Chinese. How was Siui to translate sentences like these: "How I regret not knowing the Chinese language, so as to express in your own tongue all the sentiments of gratitude that I am carrying back to my country;" or, "Tzo-Tzoun-Tan, illustrious warrior and no less famous governor, what joy for me if our contract for

bread should be the means of making your name more famous!"

Sosnowsky persevered, however, in translating his letter, and assembled a congress composed of the two interpreters, two mandarins, Tchou and Pinn, and of Tan-Loe and our Cossack. Through the thin partition between our rooms we could hear the same phrases being explained three nights running: "From the depths of my soul comes divine truth, great hospitality, the glorious name of Tzo; thanks, again, a thousand thanks," &c. The scene was most comic. The mandarin Tchou was in shouts of laughter, and we ourselves could not help joining in the laugh, although our laughter was tinged with bitterness.

CHAPTER VII.

Departure from Khami—Tian-Schan Hills—Town of Barkoul—The Mandarin Van—An Ancient Religious Monument—The Lan-Tcheou Mandarins leave us—Imaginary Brigands—False Alarm—Town of Hou-Tcheng—Preparations for Crossing the Desert—Search for a Guide—Departure.

August 30th. Before starting we went in a body to take leave of the General Tchan, who had been waiting the whole morning for us. He said many amiable things we were unable to understand, especially thanked me for his portrait, and went with us to the gate in the camp, an honour only paid to persons of high rank. The Indian Houa-Li accompanied us on horseback, besides thirty soldiers armed with Sniders. The caravan consisted of twelve carriages and eight mules. We left the Khami oasis again to plunge into a rocky desert, bounded by the Tian-Schan chain, but we knew that we should leave the Gobi on the following day.

After travelling four versts we perceived a double row of soldiers armed with pikes ornamented with tufts of red horsehair, and numerous flags floating in the breeze. Six volleys welcomed our arrival, and the officers fell into our train, whilst we defiled past the ranks. This surprise, provided by the General Tchan, greatly embarrassed us at first, but we duly expressed our gratitude, and I deputed Houa-Li

to transmit our good wishes for the Chinese army, and our hope that it would always come off victorious. A little farther on Houa-Li left us, to our regret. The mirage was now all we had to look at. Towards twilight we reached the first of the Tian-Schan Hills. The moon lit up our march through a ravine to the music of a rippling stream, and soon we halted in a large village inn. Our three mandarins, and two others named Li and Ta, had already arrived, the latter to escort us to Barkoul. To-morrow we cross the Tian-Schan.

August 31*st*. We left in the morning. After bidding a last farewell to the Gobi, we turned northward and plunged into a deep gorge. What a contrast to the plain of yesterday! Here were yews, elms, and briars, and the songs of birds. The wide but very bad road wound up the hill, and the trees became fewer as we ascended. The southern slopes were covered by a thick forest, chiefly of larch and juniper. We never stopped during our ascent, and soon reached the snowy region on the northern side. The air was cold, although the sun shone brightly, for there was an icy, penetrating wind. In some places there was so little snow that one could see the shortest grass; in others the tall herbaceous plants were very nearly hidden. The numbers of butterflies and other insects lying numbed or frozen by the cold proved this snow to be quite recent.

On the summit of the mountain we found an old Chinese temple, three *iourtas*, and a hut with a small courtyard guarded by four Chinese soldiers, deputed to provide lodgings for the strangers. As it was still quite light, we decided on going on, and began the descent of the northern slopes. It

was very cold; the thermometer registered 11° Reaumur. Accustomed to a temperature of 30° Reaumur, I could not endure the sudden change, and went back into the hut. We should have done better to spend the night there, for not only had the *iourtas* been expressly prepared for us, but the baggage, which had fallen behind from the difficulties of the road, would then have caught us up. Was not the expedition to give an account to the whole world of its journey across these unknown mountains? It would have been well to get more intimate knowledge of the details of the locality, and to secure seeing a sunrise and sunset from a height of nine thousand feet.

We began to descend on foot, leading our horses by the bridles. The road was wide and good; three or four carriages could have gone abreast on it nearly all the way. The setting sun threw its last roseate rays upon the snowy summits, but in the plain beneath darkness had set in. At nightfall we arrived at Schi-Ou-Li-Tchouan-Tzy, down in the plain. This was merely the courtyard of an inn, where two small huts, containing but one room each, was the whole accommodation. Four tents had been pitched, one for the chief, a second for the two mandarins, and the two others for the soldiers. We had a tent of our own, but it was in one of the carriages that had been delayed. I went to our chief, and asked what arrangements he had made for us. He deputed his aide-de-camp, the photographer, to take us to the huts and give us our choice. I could not even set foot in the first, it was so small and filthy and so full of smoke; one Chinaman was asleep, another peacefully smoked

his opium, while a third was beginning to light a fire for cooking purposes. The second hut was bigger and cleaner, and occupied by six soldiers lying on the two *kangs*. A corner of the room was given to us three—Matoussowsky, the Cossack, and myself. The soldiers were tranquilly smoking opium, and, taking us for comrades, offered us their pipes. Our Cossack had pity on us, and went, of his own accord, to tell the mandarin how badly housed "the gentlemen" were, and to ask for one of the soldiers' tents. Hearing that we were also "gentlemen," the mandarin, although subordinate to the chief of the expedition, ran to apologize; and, begging us to enter his tent for an instant, gave the necessary orders for preparing another.

September 1*st*. The last of our carriages only arrived at mid-day. As we had to travel one hundred and thirty *li* (nearly thirty-seven miles) before reaching Barkoul, the chief decided on remaining where we were till the following morning, and on doing the whole distance in one day.

September 2*nd*. We got up long before dawn, as the stage was a long one. Our road continued through the same valley, shut in between two chains of mountains; to the left the Li-Houa-Tchan-Tzy, and to the right the Doun-Schan, or Naryn-ker, in Mongolian. This valley was now quite deserted; the fields, once cultivated, were now abandoned, and nowhere was a single dwelling to be seen.

The sun was setting when we descried Barkoul in the distance, with its four towers. No other monument rose above the walls. To our right was an inn, where the mandarin Li awaited us. He had returned for us after conduct-

ing our colleagues into the town. He took us into a house, where the owner offered us bread and cucumbers, probably for the pleasure of examining us at his leisure, and we then went on to the new or Manchu town, with its earthen ramparts skirting the road, and ruined in some places. Absolute silence reigned within; it was more like a huge cemetery than a town. A short distance from the Manchu quarter rose the ancient or Chinese town (Han-Tchen); over the gate hung a cage, this time containing a pair of boots instead of a head.

In China when an official beloved of his subordinates exchanges his post for another, it is the custom to beg him to leave the shoes he wears at the moment of departure as a remembrance. The meaning of this habit is that although the man may have gone, he has yet left his mark behind him. The Chinese town was less dreary than the Manchuan; it boasted of a few pretty temples and towers; altars were erected in front of the public buildings. The streets we went through were full of dust and smoke. The inhabitants looked upon us with astonishment, and some could not resist a laugh at our expense. When we reached the house in which we were to lodge, the mandarin Li took us by the arms and led us to a room, where we found our colleagues established, with Van, the Governor of the town of Barkoul. This official had come in contact with Europeans at various times, and tried to imitate them, although somewhat unsuccessfully.

The night was extremely cold. I wondered how the Chinese could stand the severity of the winter at a height

of seven thousand feet, living in houses where the walls were mere partitions. It appeared that they wore furs day and night.

September 3rd. The women and young girls walked about Barkoul quite freely, without showing the timidity usually found in the fair sex of China. Their type was the same; their hair carefully dressed, and they all wore flowers and pins in it.

At Barkoul I had the chance of acquainting myself with the way a mandarin employed his day. Van had spent the night in the same room with us, and slept on a *kang* in the middle, separated from the others by a partition. Having risen early, he went out into the yard, where a basin of hot water was brought to him with a bit of rag, and he bent over the basin and rubbed his hands and face with the rag. After a somewhat heavy breakfast he wandered about from one place to another, bothering us with questions on every kind of subject, and touching everything; he even took upon himself to unscrew my revolver. (I must, however, mention that he did understand the taking firearms to pieces and putting them together again.) Perhaps our presence prevented his working; but that day he certainly did nothing, and no one came to him for anything.

I have alluded several times to the familiarity subsisting in China between masters and their servants, and have already related how, during our visits to persons of importance, the lower orders and the servants were admitted into the reception-rooms to have a look at the "men from over the seas," and how they appeared quite at their ease,

although they held aloof. But I noticed another fact so opposed to the preceding that I can hardly reconcile the two: thus, the servants freely went in and out of the same room, where the inferior officials prostrated themselves before Van, as if they were in their own quarters, whether he was there or not. If I showed Van something of interest, his dirty, ragged servant would lean over his master's shoulder to get a good look at it himself, while Van, if struck by anything, would appeal to his servant to share his astonishment. Afterwards, when he was absent from the room, his servants came in and out, stopping to watch us at work, &c. But an hour later, when a gun announced the return of their master. They all rushed to the door with frantic cries of "*Laï-le, da-jen, laï-le!*" (he comes! the master comes!). Some effaced themselves, others drew up in the yard to receive him, and when their master passed bowed themselves to the earth. A moment later they were once more fraternizing together, or the servant leaning over his master's shoulder. Strange habits, confirmed by centuries.

Van was a great fancier of arms, horses, saddlery, and handsome harness. He showed me his equipage, his mules, harness, and bridles, and told me he had paid 2,000 roubles for one of the latter. He further showed me his guns and rifles, and even a Winchester repeater to fire sixteen rounds. My double-barrelled gun pleased him greatly, and he offered to buy it. I presented it to him, much to his delight; and he then tried to think what he could give me in return. On hearing that I had sold my horse and was looking out for another, he offered me one of his own. Van had really

become quite attached to me, and never left me all day, asking me every sort of question, like the celebrated Yan at Pekin. He was intensely interested in my surgical instruments, and had heard about various operations, including the Cæsarian.

Having noticed some portraits in my collection of drawings, he begged me to take his, were it only a "little one," probably thinking that the smaller it was the less trouble it would be. Other Chinese made the same request, saying "only one."

September 4th. Van gave us several bits of stuff, as well as eatables—hams, meats, and brandy.

When we left Barkoul our caravan consisted of nine carriages and thirty camels. Thirty mounted soldiers, armed with pikes and matchlock guns, escorted us. We had another mandarin to accompany us, named Li, a grave-looking man, who at once inspired confidence.

A very short way out of the town we stopped to see a temple spoken of with the greatest reverence by the Chinese, and three thousand years old. In the courtyard a little latticed kiosk, tiled over and slightly inclined, protected the monument, Tzinn-Tchan-Beï by name, which was merely a stone (hip-stone, or *youï*, in Chinese) about six feet high, three feet wide, and half a yard in diameter. This stone widened beneath the surface into the shape of a reversed mushroom, and was polished on one side. Three thousand years ago Tchan, the famous captain, engraved a list of his victories upon it. The Chinese make models of this stone, and sell them all over the empire. We each had two given us by

the mandarins Tcheou and Pinn, who told us it was a good thing to have them in the house as a safeguard against fire, and seemed really to believe this to be the case.

Ho and the two mandarins now left us to return to Lan-Tcheou. We bade each other farewell in a tent, according to Chinese custom, but I was too much moved to be able to express all my gratitude to them in such fitting terms as I could have wished. They stood looking after us a long time, waving their hats, as they had learnt to do like Europeans.

We passed the night in the ruined village of Kou-Heï-Tchouan, at first under a tent pitched in the yard of a small house; but subsequently we were driven by the cold into a small and very dirty room.

September 5th. We now had the salt lake of Barkoul to our right, surrounded by a white ring of salt deposited on the shore, and in front of us ripe wheat-fields, yellow meadows, villages, and isolated houses. The neighbourhood was deserted, and hitherto we had only met two carts, loaded with sheaves and drawn by cows. The clay soil was strewn with pebbles and full of marmots' holes. Farther on we saw a few antelopes.

We spent the night at Lei-Tchouan, where fires were lit in the courtyard. The men talked incessantly, till a soldier struck his *lo;* the camels screamed, and then all was plunged into silence. I was awakened by the clatter of horses' feet, and exclamations of "He has come! he has come! Van has arrived with thirty horsemen." A rumour had, in fact, circulated during the evening that Van would



BARKOUL LAKE.

shortly join us, and remain until another escort met us from Hou-Tcheng.

September 6th. We looked about for Van in the morning, and were then informed that he was not there, but that he had sent a reinforcement of thirty men, with an officer at their head.

Sosnowsky had gone off to shoot with a Cossack, and no one knew what he had decided on doing. The soldiers from Barkoul had come 160 *li* without stopping, and their tired horses needed rest; furthermore, the mandarins had agreed on doing only a short stage, but had said nothing of their intention.

The road went over the steppes, and owing to the amount of salt impregnating the soil, the grass only grew in patches.

At sunset we were very glad to see our camp, for nothing is more delightful than to throw oneself on a bed after a day spent on horseback. We were surprised to find that it had been decided to halt at this place, but learnt that the mandarins had definitely refused to go further, asserting, with perfect truth, that they were responsible for the horses belonging to the Government, and that it was impossible to make them go 100 *li* without baiting them.

The nights were very cold, and our monkeys suffered considerably. I took mine into my tent and arranged a sort of hut with mats for it, for which the small creature expressed its thankfulness in a curious sort of little cry.

September 7th. We got through the night quietly, and forgot all about the brigands. The danger was apparently over, as our chief, who had been on horseback all the day

before, had now got back into his carriage. But I must return to the monkeys. An old one was given charge of the treasure, and acquitted its duties to perfection, caressing to some and very wicked to others who teased it. It was put on the back of the camel carrying the chests containing our silver; the poor thing, suffering greatly from the motion of this "ship of the desert," threw itself from side to side, leaning up against the chest and gnawing at its chain. I was really thankful when, two days afterwards, death terminated the little creature's sufferings. No one dared to relieve the poor monkey, as that would have been accounted a breach of discipline.

We halted in the ruined village of Tzy-Tzy-Teï-Tzy. Other Chinese going to Barkoul also halted for the night in the same place, and occupied a fairly well-preserved temple. The interior contained five idols, three seated and three standing.

The Chinese had tied up their horses, had lit a fire, and were boiling water in this sacred edifice. The altar was transformed into a kitchen-table, smoke filled the temple, and the occupants were getting ready for supper and bed. Orders were given to keep our revolvers handy, and the Chinese fired off guns all night.

September 8th. The road now crossed the mountains. These were not very lofty, but apparently were full of brigands. The Cossack told me the Chinese asserted that there were brigands in every hole, and that if I staid behind to pick up plants I should at once be carried off. The country was solitary and dreary, with sparse vegetation,

and differed but little from some parts of the Gobi; water, however, was not of such rare occurrence. Matoussowsky and I stopped in a huge temple in the ruined village of Bo-Schan-Tzy, where we lunched off some cold mutton, and biscuits steeped in cold tea. Whilst eating we examined the idols and frescoes. They represented scenes of obscure meaning, although the individual figures were full of life and movement.

September 9th. After travelling 120 *li* without misadventure, we halted at the ancient village of Sañ-Go-Tchouan-Tzy, built on a meadow.

We established our camp under the shelter of some of the walls left standing. Sosnowsky occupied a temple with the photographer and the interpreter; Matoussowsky, the Cossack and I had one tent; Old Siuï, "Transparent," Tan, and Ma had another. The Chinese, as usual, talked far into the night; the sentries made a great deal of noise, and the fires were not allowed to go out.

September 10th. Last night the Cossack brought me the dead monkey. I had begun to skin it the first thing in the morning, when Matoussowsky came into the tent, saying, "Come on; the alarm is being sounded in the camp." As I paid no attention, "I am not joking," he continued; "everyone is preparing for the defence. It seems that a band of Doun-Guns is in the neighbourhood, and that an attack is expected." And true enough, I then saw everybody in the camp shouldering arms and getting into position. Carriages and camels were massed in the yard, pikes bristled around, swords were drawn from their scabbards.

But neither Li nor Sosnowsky were to be seen; no one was in command, the enemy was invisible. Neither had Matoussowsky seen the brigands, nor could he glean any information about them.

I washed my hands, and leaving my work called for my servant, who was in a terrible fright. He pointed out a hill to me, saying, "There are the brigands; they are coming; they are coming towards us."

And about a mile off, on the hill, I did in fact see several horsemen armed with pikes; others on foot led their horses, and one camel. There were ten or twelve of them at most, and coming down the hill at a footpace, they appeared more likely to be ordinary travellers than brigands.

"There are only ten of them; and then that camel?"

"It is the advanced guard," replied Ma; "the others are hidden behind the hill. They are said to be very numerous; they are on foot merely to deceive us, and have that camel with them to make us believe that they are only travellers."

All this might have been true; I had no reason to think it was not. Anyway, this was not the moment to ask for explanations; all we had to do was to get ready for action. Jan had already taken up the tent; and my plate of soup and cup of tea were put down amongst all the dirt in the courtyard. I swallowed off the soup and the tea, and lighting a cigar, took my gun and revolver and went into the yard, which had now all the appearance of a fortified camp. Everyone carried a weapon of some sort, were it only a knife; the bow and arrow presented by Van at Barkoul were used by Tan-Loe. Everyone was eager to defend himself.

We could only wait; but the enemy had had time to reach us, and still no one appeared. Opposite the yard, on the other side of the road, there stood a temple, where the photographer and the interpreter were posted, and armed to the teeth.

"Ready to repulse them?" said I.

"They are not far off," replied Andreïewsky, half pleased and half frightened; "they will be here directly."

"They will be here? Who do you mean?"

"The brigands; the Doun-Gan bands"

I ventured on to the road, to look out for brigands, but was stopped by Sosnowsky, who cried, "Keep together, gentlemen, and in case of attack assemble in this temple."

I resumed my place along with the others, and mechanically looked towards the temple, a sort of open kiosk, not unlike the stage of a small theatre. It would certainly have been useless had the enemy attacked our flank or set to work to pillage the waggons.

"Perhaps," thought I, "the brigands will keep us waiting all day." I therefore thought I might finish skinning the monkey, and went to look for the beast. I was just setting to work, when ten minutes later the whole camp was on the move, as if awakened from a long sleep. It had suddenly been decided that we were to start.

"Forwards! Tzoou! Yaba!" cried Russians, Chinese, and Mongols, without waiting for orders. Thus the battle of Lan-Go-Tchouan-Tzy never took place. I could not make out what had happened, nor could anyone else. Probably the mandarin Li knew the key to the mystery, for he

had throughout preserved his equanimity, and had never appeared to think there was any danger. It is just possible that he played us some trick to put our courage to the proof. The chief recovered his presence of mind, and began giving orders again: thirty soldiers for the rear-guard, and thirty for the van-guard, and no one to put off time on the road. Then he followed the caravan.

The very nature of Matoussowsky's work, however, required that he should constantly stop, and I did not forsake him; five of us lingered behind the others, and no one noticed it.

On rejoining the caravan we learnt two facts from our soldiers which threw some light on the affair. They told us that at the last halt two of our horses had disappeared during the night from the camp, and several of the frightened Chinese had asserted that they had seen a band of Doun-Gans, in consequence of which Sosnowsky had taken all these precautions.

The horsemen we had seen coming down the hill turned out to be a picket sent there by the mandarin Li in the act of returning to the camp. The whole thing was therefore a childish panic, and the two horses had got away of themselves. This was proved by the search instituted for them in every direction. Li being responsible for the horses, was much annoyed by their loss, and everyone seemed vexed.

There were a considerable number of wild horses in the country, as well as sheep, mouflons, antelopes, and gazelles. All these animals grazed and wandered close to the road without the least idea of the danger threatening them. That

very day I had shot at a gazelle without hitting it, and it had not stirred. I then missed a second shot, but the creature went on twenty paces and again began grazing. I only killed it at the third shot, when it passed in front of me with two others. On a subsequent occasion I fired seven times before bringing down another. This indifference to the report of a gun seemed most strange, more especially as gazelles are so easily frightened.

We stopped for the night at the village of Mou-Li-Hé, situated near a poplar wood. It was bigger than most of our provincial towns, and, judging even by the ruins, must have been a cheerful, nice little place. Now there was no one amidst these courts and gardens; the ruins seemed sadder than any we had yet come across. The shattered buildings had not been totally reduced to ashes, but were only blackened. As soon as we had settled in a house, I hurried to the Chinese soldiers to skin the gazelle they had brought in on one of their horses, but I found that, thinking they were doing me a service, they had done it themselves, but had not removed the skin from the head and the feet. Tan-Loe got possession of a bit of the flesh, and prepared an excellent dish of it for us. There was now no question of brigands, and Li smiled maliciously when spoken to on the subject.

September 11*th*. Great heat. My horse being ill, I got into a carriage. I had become unaccustomed to these primitive conveyances, as I had not been in one since we left Pekin. I killed another gazelle, but this time forbade the soldiers to touch the skin. We spent the night in the inhabited,

though ruined, little town of Tchi-Tei-Sian. The surrounding fields were in cultivation, and the harvest nearly over; but it will be long before Western China recovers its ancient splendour.

September 12th. To-day we reached Hou-Tcheng, the last town in China.

Beautiful warm weather. The mist of the preceding days had dispersed, and the distant and snowy Tian-Schan peaks were now visible. Sosnowsky started off in front, Matoussowsky remained behind, whilst I kept with the caravan. A blue tent I perceived in front prepared me to expect an official reception. An ugly little old mandarin came towards me, and with profuse bows begged me to enter his tent and rest for a few minutes.

"It was unnecessary to come to meet me," said I; "you have wearied yourself waiting for me."

"It is imperative that we should meet our guests; you are our valued guests, and we are delighted to see you. We have prepared your rooms and dinner, and have expected you for some time."

"Your name?" I asked.

"Ko; and yours?"

"Pia; your age?"

"Fifty," replied Ko, showing it on his fingers; "and your worthy age?"

"Thirty-two."

After exchanging the usual courtesies, he said many complimentary things to show the pleasure he derived from our arrival, offered me tea, and asked if our companions would

soon join us. Ko was a native of the province of Hou-Pé, where he had come in contact with Europeans. Like all the Chinese, he was very proud of this fact, and when I offered him some tobacco and cigarette-paper he said, "I know, I know how to make cigarettes; you all smoke them." He wanted to roll up a cigarette to show the soldiers he could smoke "the cigars from beyond the seas," but his inordinately long nails prevented his succeeding, so I had to help him. He next went to meet the photographer and interpreter, and wanted to wait for Matoussowsky, but I begged him to go on with me, as my colleague was still far behind. We then got on horseback and went side by side. Ko still clasped my hand, having held it continuously since we first met, but my poor horse, famished and tired out, could not keep up with his, and, being always a little behind, obliged me to stretch out my arm in a most inconvenient way. The effect was somewhat ludicrous; it looked as if he was dragging me along like a prisoner, and this tender and sudden friendship bored me considerably.

We very shortly reached the earthen ramparts of the town, surrounded by a wide ditch, and over it a narrow bridge leading to the gate.

I hoped that he would relinquish his grasp at this juncture, but, on the contrary, he held on as if I was a precious treasure, and still dragged me after him.

"We cannot get on well here," said I, trying to withdraw my hand.

"Oh yes, we can get on quite well," he replied. A very little more would have dragged me off my horse. It was

doubtless the custom, so there was nothing for it but to submit patiently.

To my great relief two triumphal arches, decorated with blue and red cotton draperies, and erected before a house in our honour, showed me that I should soon be released.

Ko took me by the arm and led me to a room where Sosnowsky was already seated with six other mandarins. I was duly presented to them, but could not find out who they all were. All six had red or blue buttons on their hats, and all were of the Manchu type. One wore a long grey moustache and pointed beard.

"I am delighted to see you," said the chief; "I have been here looking like a fool for the last hour, hoping every minute that they would go away. I am longing to go to bed, but they won't move, and have not uttered a word. Is the interpreter far off?"

"No, he will be here directly."

Andreïewsky appeared at the same moment.

"Quick, make haste," said Sosnowsky; "we have been here an hour without saying a word."

The mandarins had been waiting all this time for the interpreter, when Niaz, one of the servants engaged by our chief at Khami, came in and at once saluted the mandarins.

"The interpreter! the interpreter!" cried they joyfully.

"Be off with you," shouted the chief; "what business have you to come where you are not wanted?" and sent him away at once. The mandarins sat silent and astonished. I saw that Sosnowsky was angry about something, and it turned out that his displeasure was caused by Pawlow, the

Cossack, having been sent from here to Zaissan by an indirect road, whereby he would arrive much later than anticipated.

Forgetting all requirements of ordinary politeness towards those who offered him hospitality, and without a preliminary word of civility, Sosnowsky let them know in the roughest tones that he was not at all pleased that the Cossack Paulow had been sent off by a different road from that which he had been told to follow.

This mode of opening the conversation greatly displeased the mandarins. They put on a set expression, but answered civilly that they had sent off the Cossack by the only possible road, as there was no other, and they endeavoured to convince him of this, thereby bringing on a most disagreeable discussion. The Chinese maintained that there was neither road, pasturage, nor water in the direction Sosnowsky alluded to, and that he would have been more than likely to fall in with brigands. They further advised us to take the same route as he had.

"No, nothing on earth will induce me to go that way," replied Sosnowsky.

"Then go by the Kobdo and the Bouloun-Tahoï roads; on these you will find forage, water, and inhabited post-houses. You will reach Bouloun-Tahoï in a fortnight, and from thence to Zaïssan you will only take five days."

"What do you mean? Are we to drag on for nineteen days when by taking a straight line we should arrive in fourteen, or even twelve days, at Zaïssan? As for the brigands, they may be anywhere and may follow us."



TRIUMPHAL ARCHES AT HOU-TCHENG.

"No, they cannot," replied the mandarins; "it is two hundred *li* off."

I could not understand what they meant by this two hundred *li*.

"What do they mean with their two hundred *li*?" cried Sosnowsky. "I will show it to them on the map—I believe I have one. The brigands could have massacred us in the Gobi, at Sou-Tcheou, at San-Go, or at Tchonan-Tzy, where they stole two of our horses. No, we will not go to Kobdo."

"We do not want you to go to Kobdo; we only spoke of your going three stages on that road and then turning off to Bouloun-Tahoï. We will not take you by any other route, as we are responsible for your safety and have orders to escort and protect you," replied a mandarin, raising his voice. If you will not take our advice we cannot give you an escort."

"Then tell them we shall go alone," replied Sosnowsky, turning to the interpreter.

"No, we cannot permit that either; we have orders from Tzo-Tzoun-Tan not to allow you to go alone."

"I shall write to Tzo-Tzoun-Tan," repeated Sosnowsky, "that I cannot furnish him with bread by that route; he assured me that the distance was only three hundred and seventy-two *li*, and now we are told we shall take fourteen days to get to Bouloun-Tahoï."

The conversation continued in this tone for some time, and at last the mandarins, not having expected such a disagreeable interview, went off greatly disgusted. I remained

convinced throughout that they only had our comfort and security in view.

The dinner provided was exquisite. They gave us swallows'-nest soup. These were most expensive in that district, and cost four times their weight in silver.

Hou-Tcheng was a collection of five little towns situated not far from one another, and each having its own rampart of earth. On that belonging to the town we now were in a little temple was erected, like the loam huts, all built after the same pattern in the streets below.

The neighbourhood was just as dreary, surrounded on every side by the yellow steppes. Unlike that of every Chinese town, the population of Hou-Tcheng was not very numerous, and I had no crowd following me during my walks. About twenty individuals came after me. They were as rude as they were wretched; but I thought their conduct only a fitting return for the behaviour of our chief towards the mandarins. There was scarcely any trade at Hou-Tcheng, and everything very expensive, having to be brought from a great distance. I went out very little, as there was nothing to see, and so had time to satisfy the Chinese who besieged me take their portraits.

Our companion the mandarin Li perpetually shook his finger at me, reminding me of the portrait promised at Hou-Tcheng.

I eventually took this portrait, and unfortunately for me, it was so successful that it made a considerable impression in the official world. I had no more peace; one visitor came after another, all in full dress accompanied by their retainers,

to ask me to take their portraits, and forgetting their age and their rank, treated me with the utmost deference. The old Manchu general with the grey moustache came several times a day to see me, and at last succeeded in getting his likeness taken. I also drew my friend Ko, and the former chief of Kouldja, a handsome Manchu of the name of San-Tchan.

The first four days of our stay all the officials, even the subalterns with their copper or glass buttons, came for no other reason to pay me their visit, carefully shaved, washed, cleaned, and in new clothes; they implored me to draw them, and I was really sorry to be obliged to refuse. Tzynn, the Commander-in-chief of the province, alone held himself aloof. He did not even receive our chief, and refused the presents he offered, although he gave Siuï, who had taken them to him, 200 roubles, exactly the sum Tzo had given us at Lan-Tcheou.

Tzynn's conduct seemed strange, especially as we were not in fault this time; but after all, our mission was at an end, and we had only to return to our own territory. The mandarins who had at first peremptorily refused to give us either camels or escort if we did not follow their advice eventually decided on doing as Sosnowsky desired. He now wished to engage a Mongol knowing the direct road to Zaïssan, and one was accordingly sent to him. He was asked if he knew the route, and replied in the affirmative. The interpreter was then told to examine him and note his information regarding water and forage. Knowing how important a matter was the choice of a guide, the inter-

preter came to ask Matoussowsky's help. The latter, however, replied that he himself had no knowledge of the country, and no information on the subject, so he recommended that two guides should be questioned, and that if their directions did not agree, a third should be called in, to see which of the two had told us right.

"But where are we to find three?" said Andreïewsky, "we have had the greatest difficulty in finding one."

"In that case we ought not to trust to him; we ought to follow the advice of the Chinese."

The guide was nevertheless engaged. The Chinese examined him on their own account, and warned us that he did not know the road.

"Then find another," said Sosnowsky, as coolly as if he had been told that the guide did not know French. Another was found, a Mongol lama, named Sodmoun. The chief and the interpreter examined him. The former was convinced that he knew the way, that he had certainly done the journey, and that his account agreed with that of his predecessor.

We were really alarmed, and began to think of our provisions. Matoussowsky being a man of great experience, recommended the Cossack to be sure to take more than was actually required, in case we should run short of food. Sosnowsky was of a different opinion; he would have taken no provisions, and requested us to take as few as possible.

"We shall find game everywhere," said he. "I know the sort of country."

The evening before we were to leave Hou-Tcheng, An-

driewsky asked the chief at dinner what was to be done about the sheep, as the Chinese offered us two, and he did not know if they would be enough.

"Do not accept them," said Sosnowsky curtly.

"What! not take them! We must have something to eat; a fortnight on the road, and we are seven."

Matoussowsky and I found ourselves in food.

"How do you make out a fortnight? We shall reach the Tourgouts on the ninth day, so that will not be a fortnight; however, if they insist, pray take them. What is the use of their giving them, as we can buy them? We could pay for them."

"Then are we to take them?"

"Take them if they want to give them, for do you not see that if the Chinese once hook on to you, it is impossible to get rid of them?"

The photographer next mooted the bread question, and asked the interpreter how much we had.

"We have sixty loaves. The Chinese offer us flour, but it would be better to take more bread."

"Sixty rolls are not enough," said the photographer; "only counting two rolls a day to each person makes fourteen, and sometimes we may want to eat three if there is nothing else. We have a fortnight's journey before us, and have only bread for ten days; we ought to have at least a hundred and forty rolls."

"What do you mean about a fortnight?" replied Sosnowsky. "I repeat that on the ninth day we shall be with the Tourgouts. I am credibly informed of this, and they will

provide us with everything we require. I have written to Zaïsson that bread is to be sent us, and if by chance it should not be sent, we have plenty of money to buy more."

Tzo's words now came back to me, "You cannot feed soldiers on money."

"Order five rolls to be given out to each man for each day; it will be best to have some over."

"The baker will not have time now. He took two days to bake the sixty rolls, and we start to-morrow."

"He will catch us up," replied Sosnowsky; "call the Tartar Niaz or the Cossack."

"Stepanow," said the photographer to the Cossack, "you must order more bread from the baker, as we have not enough."

"Order bread to be baked? It ought to have been thought of sooner."

"What do you mean? Then why didn't you order it sooner?"

"I have no right to give orders; that is not my department. I have twice reported that we had not enough bread. The baker has no oven like they have in Russia; he will bring you badly baked bread, which will get mouldy and have to be thrown away. It will only be a waste of money."

"True," said the chief, "it will be a waste of money. Tell him then to make only as much as he can in the time."

September 18th. Departure from Hou-Tcheng. A cloudy sky and high wind depressed and made us still more uneasy

as to the issue of the journey, especially under the chief's iron discipline, which proclaimed, "I alone can do as I choose, and every one must obey my orders. I am like the captain of a ship, and have power of life and death. I am the sole authority and am responsible to no one."

Everything was ready, and then it was found that we had no pails for water. Those used were small and flat, and each camel usually carried two. This want was only discovered at breakfast, and now there was only one to be got.

Our escort, commanded by an officer, comprised only nine soldiers, and we had previously been promised fifty!

"Farewell Hou-Tcheng! farewell China!"

The chief went off at a sharp trot, accompanied by the interpreter and the guide, the latter flogging his poor thin horse without mercy. I went at a footpace with Matoussowsky; the caravan was well behind, none of us having any idea of the right way, or where we were to pass the night.

We soon came upon the interpreter, who had been thrown from his horse without his two companions noticing it. We stopped at a little wood, not knowing where to go next, but one of the soldiers undertook to guide us. We could see Mongol *iourtas* through the trees; some were enclosed, and others protected by high, thick reeds. Camels, horses, cows, sheep, and dogs wandered around; whilst the women occupied themselves with their household duties.

The men were cold and hungry, the animals worn out; but in spite of this we decided on going on till it got dark.

At this moment we met the Tartar Niaz, one of the chief's escort, and were told by him that the chief was in a village three miles off, and had sent him back for brandy, ham, and bread, telling him to be as quick as possible. No orders concerning us! We forded the little river of Tchoun-Schouï-He, and had great difficulty in getting our horses across its muddy, slippery bed. The camel-drivers refused to attempt it in the dark, so we halted for the night. Fires were lit, we fed and warmed ourselves, and then every one lay down to rest.

Old Siuï, who had stopped behind in one of the carriages, arrived last at our impromptu camp. The odometer which was to determine the shortest road between Hou-Tcheng and Zaïssan was fastened to one of his carriage wheels.

September 19th. The barometer had foretold fair weather, and did not belie itself. The morning was cold, and our tents and baggage covered with hoar frost. Every one was ready to start, and we only waited for the chief to join us, but the Cossack alone appeared.

"Where is the chief? How is it you are alone?"

"I have come for some ham."

"What for? Will he not come here?"

"I know nothing about it. I am ordered to bring him some ham," and he set off again.

Next came the interpreter, who told us that he had succeeded in persuading Sosnowsky to take a second guide. At last the chief appeared, and was informed that there was no forage for the horses. What was to be done? It was too

far to send to Hou-Tcheng, and useless to hope to procure any where we were. It was therefore resolved to put the soldiers of our escort on the camels, and send back the horses. Orders were next given to divide the forage we had into ten portions for our three horses. The horses were already suffering from hunger, and Niaz's succumbed after seventy-four hours' march without food; but he was merely called a fool for having chosen such a useless animal.

It was eleven o'clock before we started. The woods and winter habitations of the Mongols were soon left behind, and the irrigating canals. We now came to a sandy desert, covered with hillocks of shifting sand, measuring more than sixty-five feet. The plants growing upon them were yellow and parched, and there were numbers of holes in which the marmots had already begun their winter sleep. I envied their existence, and their abodes all lined with grass and horsehair.

We were now led by two guides, and were astonished to find the sun occasionally in front of us, whereas at other times it was behind.

The carriage, dragged along by a camel, advanced with great difficulty; the wheels sank deep into the sand, and the wretched camel stopped every instant, notwithstanding the blows rained upon him.

We now caught up the caravan, which had started before us, but had come to a standstill, the guides having lost the way and started off to find it. When they returned we had to retrace our steps, and I imagined that orders had been

given to return to Hou-Tcheng, that we might take the road advised by the Chinese. Vain hope! After having gone half a verst, we encamped near a spring hidden among reeds in the midst of a valley. Thus we had gone 12 versts (8 miles) that day. How many should we accomplish on the next? Where should we find ourselves? Everyone hoped we should make for the road indicated by the Chinese, but none ventured to express their thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wanderings in the Desert—The Volcano of Bohdo-Oula—We completely lose our way—The Chief blames the Guides—Return to the Kharmali well—We meet a Caravan—Our New Guides—Snow and Cold—Kalmuck Winter Quarters—Meeting with the Cossack Pawlow—Arrival at Zaïssan.

TERRIBLE moments occur in the lives of most men, as when battling with the elements they feel powerless to overcome them, or when helpless on the sea amidst the tempest, or when overtaken by an earthquake. At such times they turn to heaven and sue for mercy and help. Although we were not upon the stormy ocean, and the earth did not tremble beneath our feet, one of these terrible moments we were going through. Both Russians and Chinese, chance slaves of a chance master, expected a slow and inevitable death.

Sosnowsky's unfortunate obstinacy arose from the fact that in 1871 he had taken part in an expedition from Zaïssan to the lakes of Ouliungour and Bouloun-Tohoï, and, although we were now at a great distance from these sheets of water, the chief persisted in believing they were close at hand. He neither took his knowledge from the map nor from outside information; he was merely "quite certain."

"I know these steppes; the Chinese talk perfect nonsense," said he. "The idiots do not even know where to

find water, whereas I can find it anywhere by signs known to any schoolboy."

Our only salvation lay in open resistance, but a sense of duty prevented our resorting to this, and we continued to submit.

The road selected by our chief was neither of commercial, scientific, or strategical value. Its only advantage lay in being the shortest route between Hou-Tcheng and Zaïssan. I have, therefore, nothing to write concerning this arid country. At first it was devoid of water and quite deserted, but subsequently well supplied with water and inhabited by a few nomads. The lateness of the season made our journey still less eventful, and I might even bring my account of it to a close at this point, did I not think that the sequel might perhaps serve as a warning to intending travellers, and help them to avoid the dangers and useless sufferings we endured.

September 20th. In the morning four horses had disappeared, and, after a long and fruitless search, some one suggested that they had probably returned to the encampment of the previous evening. True enough, all four were found peaceably grazing in the meadow. It was mid-day before they were brought back, so we decided on staying where we were for the rest of the day.

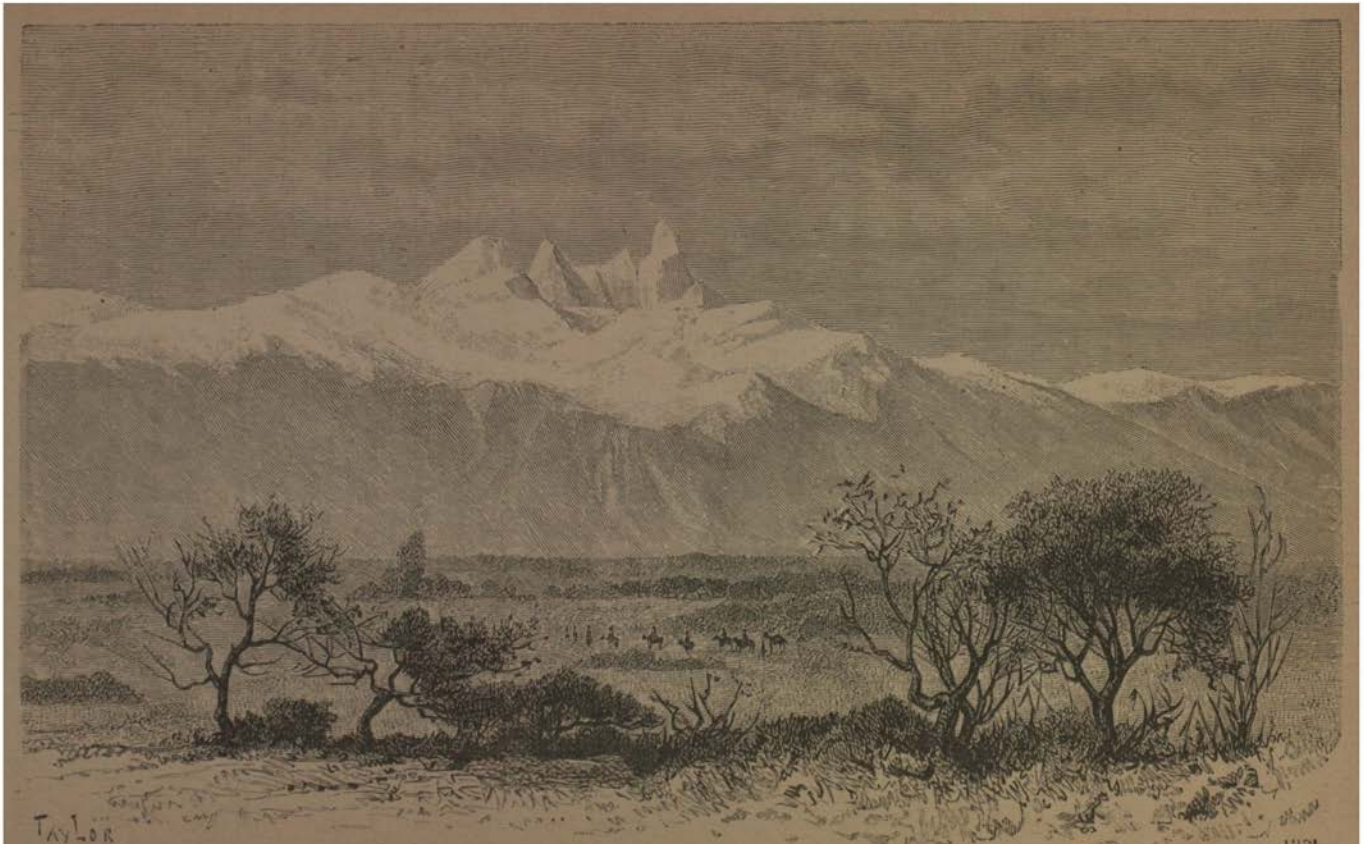
September 21st. The guides hurried us on to reach the wells before dark. They would fain have had us abandon the carriage, as it delayed the whole caravan, but the orders were to take it with us.

We slowly continued our march over the sand-hills, up

and down one after another, and were still in the midst of this sandy desert, which the guides had promised we should get over by twelve o'clock. Night came on, and we had not reached the expected well. Our disconcerted guides tried to pacify us, but they wandered farther and farther from the path, sometimes west, sometimes north, and ended by promising two wells instead of one. We had counsel together, and decided on begging the chief to command a halt, for our guides were capable of dragging us along all night. We had enough water for the men; the horses and camels must perforce hold on till the following day.

September 22nd. The guides, ignoring all their promises, advised us to start early, so as to reach the wells. The morning was very cold; a fire was kindled that we might warm ourselves before starting. The fire was kept up by the *Halorylon Ammodendron*, a plant easily broken and very suitable for fuel.

The beautiful weather gave us an opportunity of admiring the snowy crests of the Tian-Schan, yesterday enveloped in clouds. They stood out clearly against the blue sky, and I should have been glad to turn my steps towards them and verify the existence of an active crater, said by the Chinese to be about thirty-four miles from our encampment. Its name is Bai-Schan. The Chinese pointed out the fine peaks of the sacred mountain, Bohdo-Oula, visited every year, according to them, by the holy spirit of Foou-Fou-Yé, on which occasion smoke, and even fire, is seen. I asked one of the soldiers whether he had ever seen the smoke and fire himself. He declared he had seen the smoke when he lived



THE SACRED MOUNTAIN, BOHDO-OULA.

at Ouroumtzy, and that quite distinctly. He had only stayed there a short time, but others had told him they had also seen the fire.

Another mountain to the north attracted our attention, and after various conjectures we came to the conclusion that it must belong to the Altaï chain. With all these landmarks our guides ought to have been able to find their way, but they turned to the right and to the left all day, and it was only at sunset that they came upon two wells called Seb-Kiultéi. These they had stated to be on the edge of the desert, whereas they were quite in the midst of the sands. These wells gave the guides fresh courage, and they asserted that even blindfold they could guide us without losing the way. "Heaven grant it!" thought we to ourselves. These wells, where we now established ourselves, looked like two ditches of about six feet wide and six deep. They filled tolerably quickly with water, but the animals could not reach it. One man drew the water with a pail, and another threw it into a trough. As the animals could only drink after feeding, it took some time to water them.

September 23rd. We got up before sunrise, but Bao and the Mongol drivers refused to start without feeding their beasts. They spoke in such a decided tone that it was unanswerable, and we only started when the drivers announced that they were ready.

Indeed the beasts were already beginning to suffer from hunger. We had hardly gone seven miles when one of the Cossacks' horses declined to proceed, and we had to abandon it to its fate. The Chinese thought it would have been

better to kill the poor beast, and put an end to its suffering, but they had not the courage to do the deed. As the horse belonged to Government they were obliged to give evidence that it was dead or had been left behind, to which end they cut off the tail and half of the ear; and after performing this operation we abandoned the animal. A few miles further on we had to leave a camel for the same reason.

After many useless turns and twists, we at last got to the end of the sandy desert, and entered a stretch of country where not a vestige of anything could grow on the hard clay soil. If we only judge by its look, this part of the desert must be transformed into a lake in the rainy season. At this moment the soil was dry and cracked in many places.

Night overtook us in the midst of the desert without our finding any plants that might have served as food for the horses, and still we marched on. It was terrible, both for the guides, who ran along all day on foot, and for our beasts, which had had nothing to eat for two days. The night was cold, we were all shivering, and the Chinese murmured against the guide.

"Wait, wait," said they; "your head will not be long on your shoulders." The wretched Sodmoun had no answer ready when we asked why he had undertaken to lead us without knowing the way or when we should arrive at the wells.

"My brother has gone on in front; he will find the wells and light a fire." But it was soon evident that he was not at all sure of what he was saying. After a long march we silently stopped, as if by chance. The guide owned to

having lost the way, which every one knew to be the case. What were we to do? One of the drivers proposed returning to a place where there was a bush, that we might at least light a fire. There was nothing else to suggest.

"Lama," cried the chief.

"Silence!" others called, but in vain, for he had disappeared.

It turned out, however, that he was not far off, having hidden himself to avoid cross-questions and reproaches, but at last he emerged from his hiding-place.

"Well—you there, may I ask—for if—well—why did you undertake to guide us, and if—" Then Sosnowsky stopped, remembering that the Mongol did not know a word of Russian, and that he must have recourse to an interpreter. But Andreïewsky, who was perfectly acquainted with the Mongol language, was under arrest, and one of the Cossacks told off to see that no one spoke to him.

"Smokotnine, call a soldier who knows the Mongol language," and a soldier came.

"Ask him, Smokotnine, why he undertook to lead us if he did not know the road?"

The Cossack repeated these words in Chinese to the soldier, who retranslated them into Mongolian.

"I know the road, but I cannot see it at night. We must go back to the bush."

"Tell him to go to the devil. How can he talk of returning? What are the horses to be fed with. Tell him that neither camels nor horses can be fed on pebbles."

The Cossack then translated.

"Tell him he has led us into a barren desert, and to think of all our beasts."

"Think of all the animals you have led into this scrape," repeated the interpreter, and notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, we could scarcely help laughing.

The guide had never answered Sosnowsky's question, although he persistently asked him why he had undertaken to lead the expedition.

"Tell him, Smokotnine, that but for him we should have selected another route. What is he going to do now?"

The Mongol had nothing to say.

"Onwards!" said the distracted chief.

We set off again—not onwards, but back to the bush already spoken of.

"He will be the means of losing all our animals, and we shall be lost ourselves," said the chief to the photographer. "We have only food for a fortnight, and at this rate we shall not arrive in a month."

"Food for a fortnight!" replied the photographer; "rather say for a week, as you insisted that we should get to the Tourgouts on the ninth day, and from them get all we required. You even begged us not to take too much bread."

"Without that idiot, I am perfectly certain we should have been there the ninth day."

We returned to the bush, where a fire was lit. The animals got through the night without either eating or drinking. We gave our own horses some forage, but thirst prevented their eating. To crown our misfortunes, the

kettle hung over the fire was upset, and we had to go without our tea.

And so ended the sixth day of our journey by the most direct route from Hou-Tcheng to Zaïssan.

September 24th. We continued our journey over the barren and rocky hills, and at last descried a small plain covered with reeds. We reached it after two hours' march, and found two wells.

"Oussou! Schouï!" cried Mongols and Chinese, and every one ran towards the water. Sosnowsky's monkey was set at liberty, and leaped with one bound to the well. It set to work to fight its own reflection in the water, and thus got a bath, which soon cured its thirst and sent it flying back. Preparations were being made for encampment, when the chief sent word by his Cossack that we were not to stop, or even to water the beasts, for that we must not be too late in getting to the next well. We listened to this order incredulously, and no one stirred. Sosnowsky, seeing this, sent on his aide-de-camp, the photographer, with orders to start. The officer Bao very politely endeavoured to show the photographer the impossibility of complying with these orders; but the vice-chief of this scientific and commercial expedition would not take an answer. Bao, without further discussion, turned his back on him and gave orders to unload the camels, adding that we should remain on that spot all day. There was nothing for it but to submit, and appear to take no notice of the incident.

The two Horgoutta wells were probably frequented by the inhabitants of the desert, for we saw the traces of dogs,

sheep, and cranes, and even human footmarks. A Mongol hunter had stopped for his dinner. Some bits of fresh mutton on the ground were picked up and cooked by the soldiers. One of the wells was very salt, and the beasts drank from it with dislike; it was good for our soup, but not for tea. Thus, thanks to Bao's energy, the whole caravan was enabled to rest.

September 25th. Nothing to note, save the arrival of two Mongol sportsmen from no one knows where. They began at once to skin a dead horse. We paid no heed to them nor asked them any questions, so they went their way and we went ours.

Towards evening we reached a range of hills, and at their foot found a well, Kharmalì by name—a thin thread of water trickling from a crack in a block of granite, and filling a little ditch. Its bitter salt water seemed excellent in comparison with that of the previous evening.

September 26th. The ninth day of our march. According to Sosnowsky's calculation, we should now have reached the Tourgout encampment, but unfortunately we were still far from any human habitation. Our guides, who probably had got some information from the two sportsmen, came to warn us to lay in a store of water, as we should only get to the Tchonan-Oussuo wells the following evening. The poor beasts would thus be two days without water. They were getting visibly thinner, especially the horses; again before starting the Cossacks informed us of the death of another horse and camel.

September 27th. We left early, so as to reach the wells

before night. The north-eastern direction taken by the guides appeared very strange, as we ought to have made for the north-west. But it was perfectly futile to make any observation on the subject to our chief, who would not allow himself to be convinced about anything.

We continued in this direction for at least seven miles, and then described a circle to the north-west. We learnt that this useless bit of road had been gone over to look for a goat Sosnowsky had wounded the night before, and which he thought must have fallen somewhere in that direction.

Towards four in the afternoon the caravan stopped, and the two guides went off in different directions to have a look at the country and decide on the line we were to take for the next well.

We all remained on horseback with the camels still loaded, waiting for the guides, now lost on the horizon. The sun began to set, and the guides did not return, for they had again lost their way. Night came on and the pale moon arose; no orders were given out; we kept silence, as no one had anything to say, and all were anxious about the morrow and brooding over disappointed hopes and the dreadful fate threatening us. The Chinese crouched around, wrapped in their wadded garments, muttering, "No guides, no water; it is not well" (*"Mo-you Schouï, mo-you da-tzy; bou-hao"*).

At last it was decided to unload the camels, pitch our tents, and go to bed. The horses hung their heads, plaintively neighing for water, and licking anything cool that they could reach. Several of the camels rolled convulsively on the ground, screaming with agony. Their sighs and

groans bore a heartrending resemblance to those of human beings.

The misfortunes were now to overtake us of which well-intentioned people had tried to warn us.

Had Captain Sosnowsky understood, being "morally responsible for the whole party," that all this was entirely owing to his obstinacy? or did a sentiment of self-preservation suddenly rise within his breast? Anyway, he determined on looking for water in the neighbourhood himself. Assuming great knowledge of the steppes, he very shortly returned, and declaring he had seen indications of a spring, gave orders for a move in that direction that a well might be dug.

It was now dark; the camels were unloaded, and the Chinese, having considerable doubts about this well, preferred spending the night where they were. We ourselves remained with the caravan, gnawed a few hard biscuits, and then lay down; and I never closed my eyes throughout that terrible night, which I shall never forget.

September 28th. Everyone was astir betimes, the soldiers going backwards and forwards, repeating, "No water, no guides."

We were in a nice plight, and the prospect of ever reaching Zaïssan grew fainter and fainter. We would fain have warmed ourselves with a cup of tea. No one ventured even to speak the word. Dreadful thoughts came into my mind. What should I do when I felt my strength failing me? Would it be best to await death in a loss of consciousness, or to commit suicide, and thus put an end to my sufferings. I

looked out the various poisons I had about me, and regretted to find the chloroform had evaporated. If a dying man begged me to put him out of the world, should I have the courage to do it? Should I be right in so doing? I tried in vain to write. Next I thought of what would become of my drawings, of the photographer's negatives, Matoussowsky's maps, plans, notes, and journal; the interpreter's notes and the chief's labours? Above all, I felt for the poor Chinese, sent to their last account through no fault of their own. The death-struggles of our unfortunate animals also passed through my mind, and all this for want of water.

I conferred with Matoussowsky, and we decided that should our guides find no water, we would return to the Kharmali wells, a decision we should have come to long before, had it not been for their advice to the contrary. We could not imagine what had become of them. Perhaps they had succumbed after marching all day and night without either eating or drinking. If, on the one hand, we were unable to leave without definite instructions, on the other, it was impossible to remain where we were for an indefinite period. Our chief, who was out with his Cossack, the Tartar Niaz and two soldiers, had not returned either, and we all anxiously watched the horizon in the direction the guides had taken.

"A man! a man!" cried some one, and a small black speck was seen in the distance, although it was some time before we could make out whether he was on horseback or on foot. An hour went by without our being able clearly to

distinguish this moving object, an hour of terrible suspense and hope. At last we could distinguish the man as he advanced in our direction; but he made no sign, and all hope vanished. It was the starved and exhausted guide. "No water to be seen," he moaned, and then throwing himself on the ground, prayed for something to eat; he never asked for water, although his thirst must have been great.

"Where is your brother?"

"My brother will find water; he will very shortly come from that direction," said he, pointing to the east.

A gleam of hope remained, but a very faint one. When the guide had eaten and recovered a little, Matoussowsky questioned him, and having satisfied himself that the lama knew nothing, got him to own that he had no idea where we were. To try and calm our fears he asserted that his brother knew.

At this juncture we saw a horseman coming towards us, and this proved to be the Tartar Niaz, who came to announce that Sosnowsky had found no water either. We were already aware of this, as Sosnowsky had returned before he did, entirely beaten; he was quite weak, and his voice was like that of a man recovering from a severe illness.

On hearing that the lama had returned, Sosnowsky summoned him to appear, and turning to the interpreter said, "Ask him why he undertook to guide us, as he did not know the road?"

"You were quite determined to have a guide," he replied; "I asked the Mongols to direct me; it was a long time

since I had been over this road, but I thought I should remember it when I saw it."

"But you ought not to have thought, you ought to have known the road as well as your five fingers," replied the chief, going on to say, "He shall pay for this; I will give him up to the Chinese authorities, and they shall do what they please to him. Does he imagine it is all a joke?" The guide held his peace. "Let him know that this is no joke. Ask him to describe the country where water is to be found."

The other gave a few explanations like a schoolboy passing an examination. It was quite evident that he knew nothing.

Close at hand the soldiers and camel-drivers were loudly discussing the chief, "Why was he so obstinate about coming here? He was warned that there was no road; that the guides knew none, and that to go with them into such a desert was as good as going to our death. We had orders to go to Bouloun-Tohoï, and now we have been entrapped into this. Who is to pay us for the camels and horses belonging to Government dying around us? Perhaps we shall die ourselves. Why has he brought us here?"

All this was unanswerable, and we could only appear not to have heard it.

"The guide is coming," cried some one; and when he was within a mile of us we ran to meet him. Through my telescope I saw the man clasp his hands over his head and fall on his knees. All was over. Our last hope had vanished.

"Well, what news?"

"Wait. The guide is exhausted. He is not in a fit state to answer."

I went towards him. He was an awful sight; he was black in the face, and his eyes were sunken and glazed; his breast was bare, and he was rubbing the pit of his stomach. Suddenly he fell to the ground, moaning faintly "Oussou" (water), and when questioned heard not. Besides, of what use was it? It was only too evident that he had found nothing. Fearing that he would be put through the same catechism as his brother, I recommended that he should be left quiet. A quarter of an hour later he recovered consciousness, and told us how he had walked for two whole days without knowing in the least where he was going.

"What are we to do now?" asked the chief.

"We must retrace our steps," unanimously replied the Chinese, who appeared determined no longer to obey our chief. The latter summoned Matoussowsky and me to give our advice. This was the first occasion on which he had ever done so; but aware of his spirit of contradiction, we did not dare to give an opinion.

"Do as you think best," was our only answer.

"The guide proposes that we should go on to the next well without waiting to look for one in this region.

"How can you place any confidence in our guides, as they know nothing? If we do not find water before nightfall, it will certainly be the death-warrant of our animals, and perhaps of ourselves."

The Chinese demanded our return, and the guides themselves were eager to return to the Kharmali wells.

"Well, let us start," said Sosnowsky. The lama started off alone, and we were just going to follow him when it was remembered that a Chinese soldier had been left with his horse and the chief's bedding at the place where he had spent the night.

The Tartar Niaz was sent to look for him, but either he could not find the place or the soldier had left it, for he returned alone.

The Cossack Stepanow, without waiting for orders, jumped on to the same camel and started off at a trot. We waited a long time, made longer by the fear of death and the thought that we had at least thirty-four miles to travel before reaching the Kharmali wells, situated as they were in the midst of the desert. At length we saw the Cossack bringing back the Chinese soldier and the chief's bedding.

Although there was so little real cause to rejoice, we all felt thankful and sustained by the knowledge that every step brought us nearer deliverance in the shape of the wells. The day was superb; not the smallest cloud in the sky, and the promise of a clear night. It was surprising to see how well the horses understood that we were going back to water; they walked so fast that we had to hold them in and prevent their overdoing themselves.

To rest them we every now and then went on foot; but we felt more and more exhausted, and the consequent perspiration increased our thirst. I took some interest in finding out from some of the others what their sensations

were, and found that they complained of a dry mouth, of a pain, difficult to describe, in the pit of the stomach and in the right side. They all felt weak, but smoking revived their strength.

A great many required water, but did not complain of thirst; no one wanted to eat, and all had got thinner in the face since the day before.

At length we reached the spot where we had passed the night before last. My indiarubber bottle was half full of water, and I divided it among four. Stepanow the Cossack began to suffer seriously, as he worked more than the others and ate and drank less. Forty-eight hours without anything to drink! I myself began to feel something abnormal, and my thoughts were almost exclusively fixed on drinking. The most acute suffering a man goes through when dying of thirst lies in being unable to dismiss the thought of all sorts of delicious drinks. I vainly endeavoured to prevent my mind dwelling on the subject, and to try and occupy myself with other things, but the thought of something to drink was ever uppermost. I recited verses by Pouschkine aloud, Petrarch's sonnets, or a monologue from Shakespeare, but the whole time I was declaiming I thought of all the occasions in my life when I had been thirsty, and of the pleasure it had been to satisfy thirst; my colleagues felt the same.

Towards evening Sosnowsky sent off the second guide to fetch water from the well. This appeared somewhat strange, as we had already gone half way; but we ceased to wonder and went slowly forward; night had overtaken us, and the

moon lit up the dreary desert. We often walked, to try and get warm, as feet and hands were frozen.

The horses forced the pace, and did not seem in the least tired. The traces of our last march were easily discernible, and the horses and camels followed them of their own accord.

The chief had sent the guide for water because he did not wish to go as far as the wells. He therefore stopped the caravan and selected a resting-place where there was sufficient grass for the animals. The Chinese and the camel-drivers again began to murmur; but as their officer, Bao, had consented they were obliged to submit. What was to be done? We sent our Cossack to ask Sosnowsky if we might go on to the wells, and, contrary to all expectation, we received leave to go, but on condition that we took no escort.

We hastened to get at our bedding and our kitchener, and Matoussowsky, the Cossack, Transparent, and I, went off. The horses all came after us, but they were caught and taken back.

Our thirst became more and more intense; we expected our guide with impatience, as he would be sure to pass us with the water, and soon to our joy we saw the group of hills in the distance behind which was the spring. When we met the guide we took some water from him, but it was so muddy that we were at first unable to drink it. However we were only about a mile and a half from the well and could afford to wait.

At last we got up to it, and as the descent was rather stony

and dangerous, we dismounted and led our horses. At that instant I thought I heard noises, and imparted my impression to my colleague. We listened, but silence reigned.

"Who do you suppose would come here," said both Matoussowsky and the Cossack; "even the brigands would find nothing to take; you are mistaken."

But I still had my doubts, and going down the hill again heard the *fyrr* of a camel.

We could hardly restrain our horses from rushing at the water; mine succeeded in tearing off its bridle, and Matoussowsky's dragged him along notwithstanding his efforts to the contrary. It was a great pleasure to see them quench their thirst after three days' privation, but we were obliged to prevent their drinking too long, as it might have been dangerous for them.

Matoussowsky, the Cossack, and the boy drank in turns from the same cup; as for me, the very sight of the water appeased my thirst; it was assuaged by the very knowledge that I was not to die of thirst. What mattered storms or hurricanes, Matoussowsky could guide us with his compass. Not far from the well, beside a blazing log, lay the lama, our guide. He slept the sleep of a man who had not closed his eyes or tasted food and water for forty-eight hours, and who had had a weary, long walk. He was so near the fire that he would have been roasted alive had we not appeared on the scene. We pushed him on one side without his awaking; his aids to devotion were around him, and a small cup with a little pan. When our tent was pitched I went up a slight elevation, wishing to ascertain if any one was in

our neighbourhood, and came down certain that a caravan was close by. The Cossack and I went towards the spot whence the voices proceeded, and we heard Mongols and Chinese in conversation.

"Call out," said I to the Cossack.

"Who is there?" he called in Kirghiz, which surprised me no less than to hear the reply in the same language.

"And who are you?"

"We are Russians, returning to our own land."

"Ah, Russians!" replied the unknown individual, and then several of them came towards us. An animated conversation was struck up between them and the Cossack. I could not understand any of it, but I saw that the Cossack was delighted. "Ah, sir!" said he, "the Lord has taken pity on our troubles."

"In what way?"

"Well, this is a caravan spending the night here. It is going to Kobouk-Saïry, where we intended going."

I commissioned the Cossack to ask if they would not wait for us and let us do the journey with them, or whether they had not a good guide among them who would be willing to join us, and ran to communicate the good news to Matoussowsky. As elated as children, we resolved no longer to depend on chance or to miss the deliverance offered us. What matter if we were accused of insubordination, or threatened with a court-martial. We were determined to go straight to Russia instead of returning with shame to Hou-Tcheng, or wandering any longer with ignorant guides, and on leaving Captain Sosnowsky to his own devices. The

Cossack, who now returned, told us that this caravan had left Hou-Tcheng four days after us, and was to start at daybreak, but that two men consented to remain behind as our guides, and would join us in the morning.

Tea was ready, but the water seemed to excite instead of assuage our thirst. If we had given way, I know not how many cups of tea we might have swallowed.

The Cossack and Transparent went off to a place where there was grass for the horses, and we then lay down, thankful for this lucky find and that we had made for the well instead of remaining with our caravan.

September 29th. The Cossack came early to awake us and announce the arrival of our new guides. They saluted us in the usual Mongol fashion, and squatted down in front of us. One of them was a lama, and might have been twenty-five years old. The second was a Tourgout, by name Baltchak, twenty-two years old, and a hunter in the steppes.

The lama wore a greasy skull-cap, and the hunter a Chinese hat turned up with fur. They both lived at Kobouk-Saïry, had driven a flock to Hou-Tcheng, and now were returning with a caravan of Chinese merchants. We offered them tea, and questioned them as to our route. The descriptions they gave were absolutely different to those given by our former guides. They would fix no price for their services, and left it entirely to our generosity. We might now consider ourselves the most fortunate of human beings, but we were nevertheless somewhat uneasy as to the view our chief might take of our conduct.

It was only towards mid-day that our companions began

to join us, one after another. They all went straight for the well. Men, horses, and camels pushed and scrambled, the result being that some got no water at all that day. As the cavity only filled by degrees, it was empty most of the time, and the well was only accessible on one side.

Our tent was near the spring, I could see the suffering the poor beasts were in and how they each struggled to be first at the water.

The birds flying around were placed at a considerable disadvantage by our encampment. The bolder amongst them hopped into the pit, but it was absolutely empty. I succeeded in arranging a little trough for them by putting a can of water into the ground and surrounding it with grass, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing them come and satisfy their thirst. I was only sorry I could not do as much for the camels and horses. Two of the latter expired during the day, and the Chinese soldiers took advantage of this to lay in a store of meat.

October 1*st*. Our new guides urged us to set off in good time. The camels had a double load on account of their diminished numbers (a third had died). We were struck by the difference in the direction we now took. Instead of going east, we now turned west. The difficulties of the road were heightened by a deep shifting sand. As for the carriage, it could not get on at all; the chief was implored to leave it behind, but to this he would not consent. At night we halted at the Tchouan-Oussou, well hidden in a profound ravine by rushes growing thickly around it. The water in this well was salt, and had moreover a most dis-

agreeable taste. Later on we heard the chief order the guides to take three camels and go and find the carriage which had been left behind. This they very unwillingly did, and started off without having had anything to eat. I feared that these men, knowing the steppes so well, and being as free as birds, might be tempted to go off with the camels and leave us to our fate, as there was nothing to bind them except their word.

October 2nd. The carriage only caught us up at nine in the morning, and orders for our departure were immediately given. The drivers declined, however, to start without feeding their camels.

The guides had warned us that there would be a two days' journey without any well. The photographer and interpreter recommended that we should remain where we were till the following day, as so much time had been lost. But the chief thought differently.

"Every step in advance counts," said he, and the order was given to set off in two hours.

Just as we were starting, a horseman gallopped up who proved to be a messenger Sosnowsky had sent from Hou-Tcheng to Zaïssan. He had delivered his missive, and now returned quite pleased with himself, expecting a reward for so promptly executing his orders. Summoned to the chief he entered the tent, saluted in Mongol fashion, and squatted down.

"How did you dare mislead us as to our road?" said the chief through the interpreter.

The Mongol, who had by no means expected such a recep-

tion, was much disappointed. All our misfortunes seemed put to his account. He was blamed for everything that had happened, asked a thousand times how he had dared to lie in such a fashion.

When the Mongol recovered his presence of mind, he endeavoured to justify himself, saying, "It was not I who recommended that road; I told you all I knew about it, and this is proved by my getting safe back to you from Zaïssan." He was nevertheless sent off, and relegated to the Chinese officer for punishment. Although everyone knew the poor man had nothing to do with the matter, he went from one log to another without anyone daring to show him any kindness, and at last went off—God knows where. I was quite alarmed about him, and wondered where he would eat or sleep.

It was more than mid-day, and we were advised either to remain where we were or to go on to the I-Tche well, about three and a half miles off. But the chief did not think this was a good plan, and gave orders to do about eight or ten miles more before we rested, and then sent the camels to get water. The photographer, the only individual who dared to argue with him, tried to show the absurdity of this; but an hour later we forsook the well with no sort of reason, only to spend the night in the midst of the desert, whence the camels were to be sent for water.

October 3rd. After a day's march, we stopped at a spot called the tomb of Oulan-Hochoun by the Mongols. There was no water here. The chief personally distributed a ration of salt, muddy, and nasty-smelling water to each of us.

October 4th. Late at night we reached the Tche-Ké well, considerably fatigued after twelve hours on horseback.

October 5th. To-day we crossed a vast expanse of the desert; the soil being impregnated with salt, covered everything with a slight crystallised layer.

We stopped at the Sououlgou well, and the water was good enough to make tea with.

October 6th. This desert was worse than the Gobi. In the latter we at least came upon two wells a day, and an occasional oasis, but here we barely come on a well every second day, and never saw an oasis.

The sky was overcast: it had rained in the morning, and a cold, penetrating wind got up. To keep ourselves warm we were obliged to walk. The Chinese who came from the South were the first to suffer. Tan-Loe had only a wadded garment. Transparent was very literally transparent. I made them give him a vest, and wrapped him up in my sheepskin. I feared my monkey would not survive the cold. Ma had hidden it under his clothes, but the little beast put its head out perpetually to see what was going on. To increase our difficulties, the snow began to fall thickly, and left the ground slippery as it melted. As a climax to our misery, hunger began to assert itself, for we only ate once a day, and the food was even then insufficient. No more meat; only a little flour.

Towards evening the wind fell, but the snow did not cease.

Where were we going? No one knew, for the chief had

sent the guides on in front to look for provisions, or rather for sheep.

At nightfall we stopped. Some set to work to clear the snow away and pitch the tents; others gathered sticks to kindle a fire, which was not easy. Tan prepared some soup, others filled their pans with snow and hung it over the logs. We had a little vermicelli soup; but what soup! and then a very small piece of mutton. I do not know what our colleagues managed to eat, but the soldiers feasted on camels' flesh. I tasted some, but it was very nasty and had a disagreeable smell.

October 7th. The wind had fallen, but the cold was intense and the desert covered with snow. Before starting we warmed ourselves over the logs, and my monkey got right into the fire, after tearing a piece off the coat that had been made for him at Hou-Tcheng.

We started without our guides, who had not returned. Poor Baltchak must have spent a wretched night, for his travelling bag, with his bread and his *touloupe*, had been left behind in one of our carriages. But he did not complain when he returned. He brought us good news of the existence of a Tourgout or Kalmuck camp close by.

We were to have reached these famous Tourgouts on the ninth day after our departure from Hou-Tcheng. We had been twenty instead of nine days without seeing a single habitation. But we passed by this first encampment, and stopped at the second, as being much larger. There were six *iourtas* round the well. The inhabitants of the camp were mostly of middle height, and seemed strong and

healthy. Their heads were shaved, and they wore one or two plaits, but in winter allowed their hair to grow. They scrutinised us without any alarm, as had sometimes been the case in China, and they asked for tobacco and entered into conversation. The Tourgouts wore sheepskins or goatskins, undressed leather shoes with the hair inside. They were bareheaded, or wore little Tartar skull-caps, and the children ran about in their shirts with bare feet. The monkey attracted most of their attention, and they were struck with its resemblance to a man. Some of them even took it for a "little man," and addressed conversation to it.

We now entered the *iourta* where we were to spend the night, and found Tan-Loe bargaining for flour without being able to make himself understood any more than Ma, who was washing the dishes. Both imagined they were in Russia, and were greatly surprised to hear that the Tourgouts and Kalmucks were subjects of the Emperor of China. A log blazed in the midst of the *iourta*, and filled the place with smoke; but, undeterred by this, we ate heartily and went to bed truly thankful at length to have left the solitude of the desert.

We dismissed our former guides, the brothers Sodmoun and Ba-hé. They each got four roubles and a cake of tea, and set off on foot with probably no very agreeable impression of us.

October 8th. The cold made us very reluctant to get up. The Chinese had lain down in their usual fashion, without any shirt. Not one had even taken a cold. The owners of the *iourta* who had given us shelter were paid 2 roubles.

They were quite satisfied, but begged us to give them a bottle, a very useful article in their establishment, and not easily procurable. The bottle greatly delighted them, and the whole population came to examine it.

October 9th. We next came to a small camp of nomads, and our guide, Baltchak, recommended us to replace him by another, saying he knew the road well, but did not like the responsibility.

Sosnowsky would not take his advice, but ordered the guide to go on with us, saying that he knew the road quite well himself. Sosnowsky made us turn to the left on one occasion, contrary to the opinion of the guide, who, as the chief declared, knew nothing about it. After marching two hours it was found that we were on the wrong road. The guide, on being consulted, tried to put us right again, and then proposed leading us to another camp a good way off, where we arrived very late in the night.

The sudden arrival of Russians during the night considerably alarmed the Mongols. The *starchina* (the elder, or head of the community) sent off all the beasts, and sounded the alarm to call the inhabitants to defend their goods. We had the greatest difficulty in tranquilising the poor man.

We were lodged in a most miserable cabin, with walls blackened by smoke, and a large hole in the ceiling to let it out. The hut was empty at the moment, although a sort of fuel made of dung, and called *kiziak*, was smouldering in the centre of it. Our Cossack had got hold of some of this *kiziak*, meaning to make up the fire, when an old man ran and took the fuel out of his hands, threw it on the ground, took it up again,

and repeated the same process, shouting and threatening to fight him. It was difficult to make him listen to reason, as he could understand neither Russian, Chinese, nor Kirghiz. Fortunately the guide came to us at that moment, and made the irate old man understand that we intended paying for his property. The Mongol at once calmed down, and ran to fetch water, a saucepan, and another supply of *kiziak* for us, asking the guide from time to time whether he would be paid, and to show him the money. The sight of silver quite appeased him, and he even began playing with my monkey, dancing and jumping before it, but the little creature was too tired with the journey to join in the fun.

October 10th. These winter quarters, called Tchogan-Hamyr, were well known to the Cossack Stepanow. "We are quite at home here," said he, "and it is useless to keep the guides any longer."

So our deliverers were dismissed with a liberal reward; they each got 4 roubles, a piece of plush, some cotton for a shirt, and a cake of tea.

October 12th. The last day of our journey beyond the Russian frontier. Near a Buddhist temple, the last we saw, and close to another winter resort, we were met by the Governor of Semipalatinsk with other officials, and a good many inhabitants of Zaïssan. I can never forget the *ïourtas* draped with carpets, the white linen, the shining samovar, and the cleanliness to which we had so long been strangers. Nor can I ever forget the moment when our worthy compatriots came to greet and congratulate us on the successful termination of our journey.

Whatever happened, I could not have missed seeing the Matena temple. It was three storied, and built of stone with a Chinese roof, so planned that the second story was smaller than the first and the third smaller than the second. One could thus go round each story outside, although it was not very safe, as there was no railing. Inside the temple the principal idol was placed at the end opposite the door, and in front of it was a table for offerings, and at the sides little idols in glass cases. A carved and painted wooden colonnade ornamented the interior of the temple. We left again on the 13th October, and on the 14th reached Zaïssan. We stayed there a week, waiting till it was possible to start in sleighs. The week was devoted to receptions and parties in our honour, given by the kind inhabitants of the little town.

It was like emancipation from slavery to most of us. Discipline is, of course, necessary, but we had been far from imagining that our journey would take the form of a military expedition, rather than that of a voyage of discovery through this almost unknown country. Our education and knowledge of the world had led us to suppose that it would be carried out in a friendly spirit, and that we should all daily exchange our views on the work to be done, and our opinion on what we had observed. The reader may have seen how mistaken we were, and may be able to understand how thankful we were to get to Zaïssan. The party now dispersed. Tan-Loe, frightened by the snow and the storms of wind, preferred returning with our last escort, although I invited him to come with me to St. Petersburgh. Ma also

elected to return to his own country; Smokotnine took "Transparent" home with him and adopted him. The two other Cossacks also returned home. I heard later on that the "representative of a respectable house of business," Siuï, had gone back to Kiachta. The official members of the expedition proceeded to St. Petersburg to give an account of their mission.

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